# LORD FITZHENRY:

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By MISS GUNNING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# LORD FITZHENRY.

HAVING ended the former volume with ſome of the moſt material circumſtances in the calamitous life of Lady Hillford, the unfortunate ſiſter of Lord Uxington, it is time that in the beginning of this we ſhould return to the excluſive affairs of himſelf and family; becauſe we left them rather abruptly, in favour of my little epiſode, to ſcramble out their way over the Welch mountains, without my being at all concerned in

their accommodation on the road. I have ſince heard they had a mighty agreeable, ſafe journey, and am content to meet them again at the gates of Uxington Lodge, to which their equipages are juſt drove up, loaded with luggage, ſplaſhed with dirt, the Earl ſleeping—Lord Fitzhenry thinking—Lady Uxington ſilent—Elizabeth contemplating the riſing moon—Jemima chattering—the women attendants yawning—the horſes jaded, and their riders fagged.

At the age of ninety-two, and in the vicinity of the Lodge, vegetated in his eaſy chair, to which his infirmities confined him, the venerable Dr. Burnet, who, it may be remem-

bered, was an old man when he firſt made his appearance in the hiſtory of Lady Hillford. His attachment to the Uxington family was ſo truly paternal, and their affection for him ſo fervently filial, that neither party would have found themſelves comfortable had any conſiderable diſtance divided them. Lord Uxington, after his return from Ireland, ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on his taking up his abode with him: this the Doctor as ſtrenuouſly refuſed to accept; but with his Lordſhip's permiſſion he built himſelf a ſmall box in the cottage ſtyle on a beautiful knoll, which fronted the ſouth, and ſtood in a ſheltered corner of his extenſive park, where he could receive the daily

viſits of his friends, when he was no longer able to viſit them.

Lord and Lady Uxington ſent to enquire how he did, the inſtant they ſtepped from their carriage; and the next morning, before any but themſelves were ſtirring, the young ladies, attended by a ſervant, tripped acroſs the park to ſee their dear old grandpapa; for ſo they had from infancy been accuſtomed to call Dr. Burnet, whom they found at nine o'clock eating his milk breakfaſt; and, in expectation of his early viſitors, his arms expanded: they ran into them; it was ſpring riſing from the boſom of winter.

Lady Elizabeth ſat down by his ſide, and

and Jemima at his feet on a ſmall tent-ſtitch ſtool, which ſhe had worked for him, that he might reſt his feet on it when they were weary: ſo turning her back to the door, her face to the Doctor, her elbows fixed on her knees, and her eyes on his face, ſhe began to prattle away, not forgetting to tell the delighted old man every thing that had happened, every thing that had been done, and almoſt every thing that had been ſaid ſince ſhe laſt ſaw him; but when ſhe came to ſpeak of Lady Owen, and Miſs Clarinda, ſhe ſtarted from her ſeat, taking off both mother and daughter with ſuch inimitable humour, that the Doctor, who had done much heretofore to blot this

trait of mimickry from the catalogue of her very few imperfections, found himſelf obliged to utter a ſort of groan, as if it had proceeded from ſome ſudden attack of violent pain, that ſhe might not perceive how much he was entertained by the exertions of thoſe dangerous powers ſhe had ſo often heard him condemn.

What is the matter, grandpapa? ſaid ſhe. Come, come, you muſt not be angry with me this once; I know you feel no pain, and that you are ready to die with laughing, though you groan ſo terribly. Stand up, Elizabeth, and make believe you are my brother, that I may ſhew grandpapa how they perſecuted poor Fitzhenry—

henry—Well, if you will not take the trouble to riſe from your ſeat, ſit where you are—it is quite the ſame thing; for they made love to him ſitting, ſtanding, and in all ſorts of attitudes. She then began in the whiſpering accents of Lady Owen:—I hope, my Lord, your Lordſhip have not got no cold with dancing—it would be a thouſand pities that young gentlemen and young ladies, who dance ſo well as your Lordſhip and Miſs Owen, ſhould ever get cold. My Lady and I agree, that there never was ſeen in any exhibition no finer a couple than you two, and ſo well matched in all reſpects; but the higheſt rank, and the greateſt fortunes, will be *inconve-*

*niated* like the groſſer part of *keration*, if they don't, like other folks, take care to keep well when they are well; ſo I deſire, Miſs Owen, you don't let my Lord ſit no longer with a winder in his face, and a door at his back.

What is that you are rehearſing, mad-cap? cried Lord Fitzhenry, who came upon them by ſurpriſe.

Ah! ſaid ſhe, as he paid his compliments to the Doctor, affecting the languiſhing airs and tones of Clarinda —Ah! I am killed with fatigue—I wonder, my Lord, how it is poſſible your charming ſiſters, who look ſo delicate, are able to take ſuch long walks.

Come,

Come, brother, why do you not anſwer, and help me off with the farce?

Piſh! replied Fitzhenry.

His Lordſhip had only preceded the Earl and Counteſs by a moment, and as he pronounced the emphatical *piſh*, they made their appearance, ſo that Jemima had only time to retort the *piſh*, which ſhe did with much archneſs; adding, What in the world is come over you and Elizabeth, that you are both grown ſo wonderfully ſolemn?

The father of Iſrael bleſſing his pious offspring, is an original, of which Dr. Burnet, ſurrounded by

the Uxington family, might be called a lively copy: beſides his bleſſing, he gave them a good breakfaſt, and appeared at leaſt twenty years younger for their ſociety. His cook made excellent rolls, and the delighted gueſts did honour to her performance. Lady Uxington with her daughters afterwards returned to the Lodge, and the gentlemen continued ſome time longer in converſation with their hoſpitable entertainer.

Dr. Burnet highly approved the plan of Lord Fitzhenry's proceeding to the continent early in ſpring, rather than waſting a year or two at the univerſity, where, the old gentleman very flatteringly aſſured him, he

he could attain to no further improvement in the ſcholaſtic part of education, than that to which by application and good underſtanding he was already arrived.

Our greateſt difficulty, ſaid the Earl, will be to fix on a proper travelling companion.

Would your ſon like a friend or a governor to attend him? aſked the divine.

A friend, replied Fitzhenry with eagerneſs—I can ſubmit every thing to friendſhip, but very little to authority; and if I am wrong, my dear father muſt be content that my

error ſhould glance back on himſelf, becauſe, if I am miſled in preferring the ſoft reins of love to the hard ones of duty, it is his own goodneſs to me that has taught me to do ſo.

Lord Uxington ſtretched out his hand—Fitzhenry preſſed it to his lips with reverence and affection—It is difficult to determine whether the actors in this ſhort ſcene, or the ſpectator of it, was the moſt apparently gratified. Would to God, ſaid the Earl, my friend, that you was no more than forty or fifty!

I underſtand you, my dear Lord—If it was not for theſe grey hairs, and worn out limbs, I ſhould be proud of

of the office you would do an old man the honour to appoint him; but as it is, I think I may be uſeful in propoſing a ſubſtitute.

Name him, name him! was the double exclamation—I will take no other recommendation, ſaid Lord Uxington—I will have no other friend, ſaid Fitzhenry—where you repoſe your confidence, I never ſhall refuſe to depoſit mine.

I will tell you who it is I mean, in ſix days, ſaid the Doctor. Next Thurſday, if you do me the honour to call at my cottage, I ſhall preſent him to you; for, till he is fortunate enough to be approved of by Lord Uxington,

Uxington, and till I am ſure you will like each other for future aſſociates, I ſhall not venture to ſpeak of ſuch an alliance to either party.

But cannot you bring us together ſooner than Thurſday, my dear ſir? aſked Fitzhenry.—Impoſſible! replied the Doctor; I muſt ſend for him from Nottinghamſhire, where he is gone to viſit his friends; nor ſhall I tell him why he is ſummoned back ſo ſoon, having left me but ten days, till he has paſſed his examination. I am guilty of this reſerve for both your ſakes, that you, my Lord, might not think yourſelf obliged to honour my recommendation, if you ſhould not happen to like the ſubject of

of it; and on his account, that your Lordſhip might judge fairly of his merits, I am unwilling to throw a veil of diffidence over them, by telling him how much of his happineſs may poſſibly depend on this firſt interview.

Ah! cried Fitzhenry with vivacity, have I your leave, ſir, to gueſs at the name of this gentleman? and, if I gueſs right, I am ſure there will be no objection on our ſide of the queſtion.

Fitzhenry, ſaid his father, our good friend muſt not be oppreſſed with your overbearing curioſity; if you are ſo eager in your purſuit of a friend,

friend, what will be your impetuoſity when it happens that you are in ſearch of a miſtreſs?

At this queſtion the ardency of Lord Fitzhenry forſook him; the divine image of Miſs Melmoth ſmote his boſom, and coloured his cheeks with a dye deeper than crimſon: but this change on his countenance paſſed unobſerved, as he had the addreſs to turn from his father, and ſtammer out ſomething, which, if it meant any thing, was a heſitating apology, where he would have thought it unneceſſary if this trifling accident had not made him of another opinion.

Lord

Lord Uxington looked at his watch—he ſaw with ſurpriſe that it was already paſt the Doctor's dinner-hour, and haſtened out of the houſe, leaning on the arm of his ſon. As they ſtrolled through the park, he aſked him, who was the perſon he ſurmiſed to be the ſubject of Dr. Burnet's recommendation? and Miſs Melmoth being puſhed further from his face, though nearer to his heart, he was able to make a very rational ſort of anſwer.

Lord Fitzhenry put his father in mind of Sir William Courtenay's ſons, who were great-nephews to Doctor Burnet, the eldeſt of whom he intended for his heir, and aſked, if he did not think it likely that it might be

be one of thoſe gentlemen to whom he alluded? The Earl agreed that it was extremely probable one of the younger brothers would be the perſon: I think it is impoſſible it can be Mr. Courtenay, ſaid he, for he has been already five years on his travels, and I have heard him ſpoken of as the moſt accompliſhed young man of the age.

The principal gardener at the Lodge, who had been pruning in the Doctor's garden, happened to paſs by them at this moment: he pulled off his hat, and kept at a reſpectful diſtance—I can know of Frank, cried Lord Fitzhenry, what young men have been at the cottage

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ſince we were away—He was immediately called over, and the queſtion aſked him—Pleaſe your Lordſhip, anſwered Frank, there have been nobody at old Maſter's ſave young 'Squire Courtenay, his kinſman, who is juſt come from beyond ſeas, and, as I heard ſay amongſt the ſervants, is going back again in a little time. Very well, ſaid Fitzhenry; and as he walked on with his father, they congratulated each other on the certainty, as it now appeared to them, that it was really the eldeſt ſon of Sir William Courtenay, whom Dr. Burnet had fixed upon to be the aſſociate of his travels. Such a diſcovery could not but elate them both exceedingly; for though he was perſonally unknown

unknown to them, his general character, and the partial favour his uncle had often declared for this beloved nephew, filled them with the moſt agreeable prepoſſeſſions, which were more than realized when at the appointed time they were preſented to each other.

Mr. Courtenay was full twenty-ſeven; his face and figure remarkably attractive, his mind ſedate, his turn rather grave than gay, his underſtanding highly cultivated, and his judgment ripened by experience. His predilection for foreign climes had made him very much a ſtranger in his own country, not from ill digeſted preference given to the inhabitants of

of any other, but from his paſſion for natural hiſtory, to the ſtudy of which he had early attached himſelf; and, finding his enquiries better gratified abroad than at home, was the only cauſe of his ſeeming defection: for had the ſame cabinets been diſplayed to him in England, as were opened to him in other countries, the former would have carried his inclinations againſt all competitors.

It had long been the wiſh of his family, but more the deſire of thoſe ſingle ladies who had ſeen *him*, or was acquainted with *them*, that he ſhould enter into a ſerious engagement: he had hitherto evaded the remonſtrances of one party, by aſ-

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ſuring them he only waited for the conſent of his heart; and as to the other, far from being inſenſible to their deſires, he ſaw them but too plainly; and inſtead of being tempted by offered favours, he reſolved to go through the world till he could meet with a wife whoſe reſerve might engage his purſuit, or to go out of it without one: he judged the intrinſic worth of women on the ſame principle by which he eſtimated that of inanimate curioſities; he did not think that the gem which is always expoſed in a ſhow-glaſs, could demand ſo much attention, or be of equal value with thoſe jewels, which are only diſplayed to the eyes of taſte, and the ſight of which

is not attainable without that ſort of difficulty ſo neceſſary to heighten the zeſt of a connoiſſeur.

Not a day paſſed in which the young folks of the Lodge did not viſit the old man of the cottage, who forgot, in their preſence, that he was either old or diſabled. Lady Elizabeth read to him, whilſt his placid eyes would fix with delight on the ſportive Jemima, who played as many tricks as there are in a ſquirrel to divert him.

I wiſh, ſaid ſhe to him one day, that you wore a wig, ſir—not but theſe ſweet ſilver hairs, ſtroking them with her fair hands over his forehead,

forehead, are much more beautiful!

Then why do you wiſh that I ſhould exchange them for a wig, my dear child?

Becauſe I once put one on my own head, and I want to ſhew you what a little monſter I am.—Well, ſaid he, if your Ladyſhip chooſes to be rather a monſter of your own making, than a well-finiſhed work of nature, Timothy can ſupply you with a new black one, which he has not yet put on his head, as it came home but this morning.—Oh dear! that will do exactly, ſaid ſhe, black is the very colour; only, grand-

papa, be ſo good to deſire he will favour me with it for five minutes, but do not tell him for what uſe I want it.—Timothy was called, the wig produced; ſhe threw off her hat, the cap followed, and ſhe ran to the glaſs, before which ſhe fixed it, and buried under its ſtiff raven unpowdered curls, as much of her bright luxuriant treſſes as could be concealed, which was not more than one half the quantity nature had furniſhed her with; the reſt ſtrayed over her beautiful forehead and cheeks. Thus transformed, ſhe cried out, Are you prepared, ſir, to ſee the uglieſt thing you ever ſaw in your life; but don't ſcream, for I know I ſhall frighten you: and turning ſud-

denly towards him, a door immediately oppoſite as ſuddenly opened, and ſhe ſaw the eyes of the handſomeſt man her own ever beheld, fixed upon her face, over which modeſty caſt her moſt becoming mantle; and ſhame made her ruſh by the ſtranger with a precipitancy, nothing but ſhame itſelf could have inſpired. —Lady Elizabeth, who felt for her ſiſter's confuſion, followed her out more collectedly graceful, though hardly leſs agitated: the hat and cap which Jemima had thrown on the carpet were fetched away by a ſervant, and neither of the ladies made their appearance before the doctor any more that morning.

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On their return to the Lodge, poor Jemima, with tears in her eyes, complained to her father and mother of the terrible diſaſter that had befallen her, wiſhing the ſtranger was a thouſand miles away: her happineſs was ſpoilt for ſhe did not know how long a time, but ſuppoſed he was come to ſtay long enough, by the baggage ſhe obſerved the ſervants taking from a carriage; and never, no never whilſt he ſtayed in the neighbourhood would ſhe ſhew her face, or ever put on a black wig again as long as ſhe lived.

There was ſuch an air of drollery attended the rehearſal of her diſtreſs, as occaſioned no ſmall diverſion to

thoſe before whom ſhe rehearſed it: and her brother, who juſt then came into the room, ſurpriſed to find even the gentle Elizabeth joined in a laugh, of which it was evident Jemima was the oſtenſible cauſe was preſently let into the dreadful ſecret of the black wig; when, with a grave look which ſeemed ſtill more to diſconcert the unfortunate ſufferer, he ſaid, he was extremely ſorry for the accident, as he felt a ſort of *preſentiment*, that the ſtranger who had ſurpriſed her was no other than his deſtined fellow traveller, who had arrived one day before he was expected, and having ſeen ſuch a ſpecimen of family derangement, it was poſſible he might have objec-

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tions to the company of any one of its members. However, added he, to convince him there are ſtill ſome of us that are in our right ſenſes, ſuppoſe my dear father you and I go and ſhew ourſelves ?—With all my heart, ſaid the Earl: and remember, Mima, this dreaded ſtranger will, if we can prevail, certainly dine with you to day; ſo prepare the black wig for his reception, that your face may not be entirely unknown to him when he ſees you again.—She ran after them, begged and prayed that ſhe might not be expoſed to ſo great a mortification. However, when dinner was announced, and ſhe had ſeen from the window this terrible creature walking up the park, between

her father and brother, her firſt appearance before them, though beautified by all the charms of baſhfulneſs, muſt have convinced her whole family, that whilſt ſhe ſat at her toilet her thoughts had been more employed on the adjuſtment of a cap, than on the horrid diſguiſe of a black wig.

Mr. Courtenay very ſoon made himſelf a more than common intereſt in the confidence of the whole Uxington family: what his ſentiments were of them, time will diſcover. He intended his viſit ſhould be limited to three days, but for ſome reaſon or other he lengthened it to three weeks, and even then made his adieus with regret. Doctor Burnet ſaw with joy the

the rapid growth of friendſhip, in minds ſo prepared for maturing it as thoſe of Fitzhenry and Courtenay; nor did the new friends ſeparate before every thing was concluded on for their excurſion to the Continent, their route marked out, their retinues ſettled, the time for their ſetting out fixed, and their return at the end of two years ſtipulated. Beſides which, Mr. Courtenay promiſed to ſpend part of the following winter with Lord Uxington, at his town houſe, which made them all ſincerely wiſh winter was advancing with a quicker pace, that they might ſee him again in London, when they could no longer ſee him in the country.

There is an old ſaying by which we are told, that it may be poſſible to have too much of a good thing: this may be retorted againſt me for any hope I have to eſcape cenſure, ſhould I preſume to keep my polite readers much longer, by force or perſuaſion, in the ſtupid country, where I have nothing to regale their fatigued ſenſes but plain and, perhaps to many of them, unpalatable fare of domeſtic love, domeſtic comfort, domeſtic felicity, and ſuch odd out-of-the-way meſſes, for which it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe thoſe who have never taſted them can have any ſort of appetite, or will even ſit down contented, becauſe others think them the only luxuries that it

it is worth living for. Theſe hum-drum ſouls, ſo deficient in modern taſte and modern elegance, will not be diſpleaſed, if we leave them to feaſt after their own manner: and the lovers of ton will not be diſſatis-fied that I ſink two months at the lodge in abſolute ſilence, to fly away at the end of that given time into the regions of faſhion, with the whole Uxington family ſeated on my pinions.

The month in which I have taken my airy flight is December, and going on the ſame purſuit I meet a hundred others as viſionary as my-ſelf, perhaps more ſo; for I know that I am dreaming, but my fellow

travellers believe themſelves to be awake. It is no matter, we are all travelling the ſame way, and with the ſame object in view—amuſement, dear amuſement! ſome with light hearts, ſome with heavy hearts, and ſome with no hearts at all; ſuch is the general deſcription of thoſe who, like us, are poſting on to the grand mart of diſſipation.

I ſet down my pretty cargo in Piccadilly, juſt as the balls, aſſemblies, operas, plays, concerts, and ſuppers are beginning to bring people together who never deſire to meet on any other occaſion; when deſign creeps into the heart, and confuſion mounts up to the head; when

when young women are told by their mothers, at whom it will be prudent they ſhould aim the artillery of their charms, and the young men inſtructed by their fathers into what families it will be moſt convenient for them to marry. All this preparation could be nothing to Lady Elizabeth or Lady Jemima; they were neither of them to be preſented that winter:—but it was a great deal to their brother; for no ſooner had he ſhewn his handſome perſon at the levee and drawing-room, than cards of invitation flowed in upon him from all poſſible quarters.

Lord Fitzhenry, whether it grati-

ſied him or not to be ſo highly diſtinguiſhed, was adopted the idol of faſhion; whatever he wore was followed, whatever he ſaid repeated, whatever he did admired; he was the grand object pointed out by prudent parents, as a moſt deſirable alliance—All the Lady Lucys, Lady Emmas, and Lady Marys were directed by their mammas, as well as their own inclinations, to beſiege the heart of Lord Fitzhenry—he was delightful—his fortune muſt be immenſe—his father and mother old-faſhioned folks—lived with œconomy—ſpent no money—could not long keep him out of it—his ſiſters young things—had not been brought out—moped away their exiſtence in

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the country—may die of the vapours—or if they lived and married fox-hunting ſquires, five thouſand pounds to each would do mighty well where there was no rank to be ſupported. Such were the calculations made in all houſes where a titled daughter was to be diſpoſed of: the conſequence in his Lordſhip's favour was extremely natural; ſplendid dinners and fine ſuppers were as common in the environs of St. James's, as bad dinners or no dinners at all are where only the ſons and daughters of poverty have their dwelling.

Fitzhenry accepted with avidity all, or as many as he could fulfil, of the

the invitations which daily multiplied upon him—The thorn that rankled in his boſom muſt be extracted, and he had reſolution enough to try all ſort of remedies, yet found none—he ran after every ſhadow that put on the appearance of pleaſure, and when he had overtaken the phantom, what was it but diſappointment!—The reality of pleaſure, where could it be met with?—No where, but in the very image which, whilſt he cheriſhed it in his heart, he ſtrove to baniſh from his thoughts—it was the image of Miſs Melmoth.

He very often dined at a certain great houſe in a certain great ſquare, where it was hoped and expect-

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ed he would one time or other offer the ſacriſiee of ſome ſerious gallantry; but he, too honourable to make love in jeſt, and leſs diſpoſed to offer it in earneſt, had ſometimes felt himſelf in a very awkward predicament, how to decline with politeneſs the part he was expected to perform. At a dinner of this feſtive kind, which is generally given with intentions of providing for their families by more ways than one, the converſation, by deſign or accident, happened to turn on love and marriage, when the Ducheſs of Radſtock, who preſided, preſſed ſo many queſtions on Fitzhenry, as to the ſtate of his affections, attended with ſuch plain approving glances directed

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ed towards her very pretty daughter, whom ſhe had placed by his ſide, inſiſting that he ſhould ſit between them, as might have diſconcerted his Lordſhip, had he been leſs prepared for the attack, having long wiſhed to find ſome favourable opportunity when he might civilly declare his viſits were totally without deſign.

It is enough, Madam, ſaid he, that your Grace commands me to avow the condition of my heart, its ſituation is not to be envyed—her Grace ſmiled:—Six months it has groaned in captivity—her Grace frowned:—His acquaintance in her family had been of a much ſhorter date—Oh! I un-

I underſtand you, ſhe cried, you have fallen in love with one of your tenants daughters; but that is not the ſort of attachment we are talking of, neither will it prevent your ſucceſs with people of your own rank when you begin to think more ſeriouſly.

There were a dozen other young men preſent, beſides Fitzhenry, who gave it againſt him, and applauded her Grace's liberality of ſentiments; none were ſilent, all praiſed the encouraging obſervation.

No, madam, continued he, I am leſs fortunate than you ſeem to imagine; had it been a light attachment, or one by which I had ſuppoſed myſelf

myſelf degraded, do you think I ſhould have boaſted of my weakneſs, or offended your Grace with my ill-timed confidence?

Well then, ſaid ſhe, trying to hide her diſcontent under a ſmile, we are to underſtand, my Lord, that with all your attractions, you are a diſappointed lover—Pray does the Earl know any thing of this mighty early engagement?

It is no engagement, madam; I have therefore never named it to my father: the lady who will ever have a laſting claim to my affections, is unconſcious of her power over them; ſhe knows nothing of my

my preſumption, fate has placed an inſuperable bar between us.

Come, ſaid ſhe, I ſhall aſk you no more queſtions now—I ſee that you are growing ſerious, and I am a declared enemy to gravity in young men; ſo if you follow me to the opera, let it be with a cheerful countenance.

The ladies withdrawn, the gentlemen who remained behind, in hopes of getting out of Fitzhenry more of his ſecret than he had, or than it was neceſſary he ſhould diſcloſe, encountered him briſkly with champaign, which had no other effect than to make him obey the injunctions

junctions of her Grace, whoſe box he entered at the concluſion of the laſt act, gay, inconſiderate, and perfectly enchanting: it was a box of conſiderable ſize, but ſo crowded with the followers of beauty and good cheer, that when Fitzhenry opened the door, he was going to ſhut it again, and would actually have gone to another, if he had not heard himſelf called by her Grace, who told him ſhe kept a place for him. With ſome difficulty he got down to the front row, and occupied exactly the ſame ſituation he had the honour to fill at her table: the ladies never ſaw him before to ſo much advantage, his old love ſeemed to be forgot, his indifference van-

vanquiſhed, his gallantry revived; he uttered nothing but *bon mots*; he ſmiled, ogled, played with their fans, did and ſaid every thing that he would not have done or ſaid if he had not drank the laſt bottle of champaign.

Having run down one ſubject after another, he looked upon the ſtage for a new one; but the ſtage was empty, the opera was over, and the dance not begun; he therefore, in a fit of deſpair, ſent his fine eyes wandering round the houſe, in hopes to fix on an object that would inſpire him with ſomething to ſay which he had not ſaid before, when, by the oddeſt fatality in the world, he ſettled

tled them on Miſs Clarinda Owen, who ſat in Lady Fenton's box, directly over againſt him; he looked to make himſelf ſure that it was her, and being convinced of her identity acknowledged her by a very gracious bow, which ſhe as graciouſly returned, at the ſame time drawing out a ſmelling bottle, and applying it as if to recover from the ſurprize and pleaſure the ſight of him had occaſioned.

Neither the Ducheſs or Lady Betty ſeemed to take any notice of this manœuvre, though not a look or motion had eſcaped their obſervation; and when he aſked leave of abſence for a moment, to ſhew himſelf

ſelf to ſome friends he had juſt found out, they made room for him to paſs, whilſt their whole attention was directed to the box into which they expected to ſee him enter, and were not diſappointed; which was by no means a reaſon why they ſhould not be diſſatisfied. Diſſatisfied they were, for they ſaw what was not calculated to give them pleaſure—they ſaw Lord Fitzhenry gaze with rapture, and ſpeaking with animated eagerneſs to a very fine woman, with whoſe face they were unacquainted, and very naturally concluded ſhe could be no other than the fortunate enſlaver of his affections: the ſmelling bottle—the lady's languiſhing glances—Fitzhenry's

ry's haſte to go into her box—his looks—his joy—his animation amounted to proof poſitive, that this meeting had been pre-concerted; and when he joined them again, his devoirs hardly appeared, to their mortified vanity, worth receiving.

Miſs Owen, it muſt be allowed, in point of figure and face, if ſhe had not been over-run with the weeds of folly and affectation, might have commanded the admiration of one ſex, and created envy in the other. On the night of this accidental meeting, ſhe looked ſo irreſiſtibly lovely, that the elevated Fitzhenry not only paid a viſit to her acroſs the houſe, but very kindly invited

invited her to Piccadilly, and put her in mind of the many pleaſant days they ſpent together at Mountclear, in a language ſo like ſmall talk as ſent the poor girl home entoxicated with ideal conſequence, and, what ſhe had before ſcarce ventured to believe, that ſhe had gained a complete conqueſt over the heart of Lord Fitzhenry.

Pray, my Lord, ſaid her lively Grace of Radſtock, by far more lively than her daughter, pray be ſo good to inform me, what young body is that whom my Lady Fenton has picked up as her opera companion.

Her name, he ſaid, was Owen; the father had been knighted, the

mother was a widow, and the daughter an heireſs.

Oh! cried ſhe, give yourſelf no further trouble, I beſeech you; for if theſe are the people that Lord Fenton borrows his money of, and then forces them down the throats of his acquaintances, becauſe he cannot pay intereſt for it, I know from report all that I ever deſire to know of the Owen family—The box keeper prevented her ſaying more, by bringing word that the chairs were ready; and, as Lord Fitzhenry led her out, ſhe obſerved with a ſneer, ſhe was ſorry to detain him from offering his ſervices to the *knight*'s daughter. Excuſe me, added ſhe, but when we meet next, you muſt poſitively

tively tell me where to look for that *inſuperable* bar which threatens to divide you from ſo charming a creature. I ſhall be ſorry if you are abaſhed at looking up to ſo great, ſo very great an alliance: indeed, my Lord, ſuch humility would diſgrace the whole peerage.—Fitzhenry ſmiled: he ſaw the miſtake into which her Grace had hobbled, and would not lend her any aſſiſtance to get her out of it. More than once he had repented of his open declaration in regard to the ſtate of his heart—he had declared himſelf a lover, without conſidering how likely it was, the company being ſo mixed, that this news might get to the ears of his family. He was therefore glad to

let the inquiſitive lady's ſuſpicions reſt on Miſs Owen, as he had nothing to fear from domeſtic enquiries on her account: but would not have choſen that they ſhould have been directed towards the development of his hidden treaſure,—that dear and dangerous paſſion which ſtill more and more oppreſſed him, though he tried all lawful means to get rid of its burthen; ſleep was an enemy to his beſt endeavours, he ceaſed then to be maſter of his own reſolution, he was governed by fantaſies, and theſe fantaſies were full of Miſs Melmoth.

The next morning he communicated his *rencontre* with Miſs Owen at the opera to his mother and ſiſters, and

and entreated them to call at the door of Lady Owen: For I have been ſo inconſiderate, ſaid he, as to aſk the pretty Clarinda to come and ſee you, which muſt ſtrike her as a freedom I had no right to uſe, if you have not the condeſcenſion to give it another colouring.

Lady Uxington replied, they were people ſhe did not very much approve, had no intention of ſupporting the acquaintance accident had thrown in her way; however, as he deſired it, ſhe would ſacrifice a ſmall portion of her time to the good work of mending his blunders, but hoped in future he would not find her out any more ſuch employments. He kiſſed her hands, expreſ-

ed his gratitude, and promiſed reformation. Elizabeth and Jemima were tranſported with this arrangement, they had ſeen nothing like them ſince they came to town, they longed for a renewal of the ſame ſort of diverſion they once enjoyed at Lady Owen's expence,—and joined their brother's ſolicitations, that the viſit might be made as ſoon as poſſible.

The mother was not quite ſo eager as her daughters for this addition to her ſociety; and, whilſt they were debating whether it ſhould be a call or a name viſit, whether a week hence might not be quite ſoon enough for either; in all which conſiderations

ſiderations the Counteſs being decidedly out-voted, was graciouſly yielding up her own to the will of her children, when two ſervants came into the room, each bearing a jar, which required the ſtrength of a porter to lift, and ſetting them down, ſaid, that a lady had put them out of her carriage at the door, with orders to convey them immediately to her Ladyſhip, with Lady and Miſs Owen's compliments, who would have done themſelves the pleaſure of coming out then, but would certainly call again, by the time people of faſhion began to receive their viſitors.

Lady Uxington ſmiled, Fitzhenry

roared,—Elizabeth could have joined in his laugh, but, ſhocked that any human being ſhould be expoſed by example to the ridicule of domeſtics, ſhe put a check on his mirth, or at leaſt gave it another appearance, by ſaying, that it was impoſſible ſhe could give any credit to the droll adventure he had been relating. Jemima, whom at any other time it would have been more difficult to reſtrain, than even to ſilence the mirth of Fitzhenry, was now ſo full of curioſity to ſee what the jars contained, that ſhe thought of nothing elſe but getting a peep into them, as ſoon as the covers by order of her mother were removed; when ſeeing one of them filled with tamarinds,

marinds, the other with ſweet-meats, and both happening to ſuit her lady-ſhip's palate, ſhe cried out, the ſervant being diſmiſſed, Pray, mamma, let up theſe dear delightful Weſt Indian foreigners, whenever they call; their acquaintance will afford me a great deal of ſweet——

She was interrupted, the door opened, Lord Fitzhenry coloured; the Ducheſs of Radſtock, Lady Betty and Lady Di' Weſtbrook were announced; he dreaded the raillery of her Grace, and had no predilection for entertaining her daughters.

I believe, ſaid ſhe, I ſurpriſe you all with my early appearance, but

you are enough to make one in love with family hours and rural felicity; but how do you contrive, my dear Lady Uxington, to make that tall ſon of yours confine himſelf at home with his mother and ſiſters? I ſhould be glad to learn your art, for I have no ſuch influence over my boys.

Indeed you do Fitzhenry a great deal of injuſtice, madam, returned the Counteſs, if you accuſe him of devoting thoſe hours to his family, which faſhionable purſuits have any claim upon; I think it has ſeldom happened, that I ſee ſo little of him as I have ſeen ſince we came to town this winter.

Fitzhenry

Fitzhenry felt the gentle reproof, and, conſcious he had deſerved it, aſſured his mother, with an expreſſion of countenance equally gay and tender, that he planned a ſerious reform, and would give her no more reaſon of complaint againſt him.

I always look for good huſbands, ſaid the broad-hinting Ducheſs, amongſt reſpectful ſons and polite brothers, and am for ever teaching my young folks the ſame leſſon; but that is nothing to my preſent purpoſe, we are going to a review in Hyde-Park, will you allow me to take Lady Elizabeth and Lady Jemima with my girls?

Lady Uxington, with a great deal of politeneſs, declined, for her daughters, the honour of attending her Grace, as ſuch an indulgence would interfere with their ſtudies.

Your Ladyſhip is perfectly right, ſaid ſhe, I do exactly ſo with my girls, I never ſuffer them to be idle till I bring them out; but there is no ſuch excuſe for your ſon, he poſitively muſt and ſhall eſcort us, or I will never forgive him.

That would be a dreadful ſentence; for heaven's ſake do not pronounce it! ſaid Fitzhenry: my heart will certainly follow your Grace, but perſonally I am engaged, unfor-

tunately, indiſpenſibly engaged the whole of this morning.

Mortified, piqued, and angry, ſhe roſe from her ſeat, and turning to her daughters, who were talking very buſily to Elizabeth and Jemima, a little group that ſeemed mutually pleaſed with each other, ſhe ſaid to them, ſtill keeping on her maſk of good humour, Come, girls, I am ſorry to tear you from your charming young friends; but, indeed if we ſtay longer, we ſhall be too late; I muſt look out for ſome body who will have the *compaſſion* to take care of us, ſince Lord Fitzhenry is ſo *unfortunately*, ſo *indiſpenſibly* engaged—She had made her curtſey, and

and walked towards the door, when ſuddenly ſhe was again reſeated, ſaying, ſhe had changed her mind, and would not go to the review, adding in a whiſper directed to Fitzhenry, I fancy your Lordſhip would rather that I ſhould take myſelf off, but you muſt excuſe me, for I am determined to ſtay and ſee what ſort of creatures they are—— it was the name of Owen which preceded by half a minute the ladies who bore it, that had cauſed the revolution in her Grace's intentions, and made her direct her laſt ſatirical ſpeech to the ſuppoſed lover of one of them.

Lady Uxington was chagrined, her

her ſon provoked, the young ladies vexed that they dropped in at a criſis ſo mal-apropos, and the leaſt misfortune they apprehended was, that both the mother and daughter would be, for many ſucceeding days, the ridicule of every circle which the great lady honoured with her preſence; a ſentiment that did not proceed from pride, but benevolence, nor from ſhame on their own accounts, but fear for their viſitors, who they were pretty certain would be expoſed, even if they did or ſaid nothing to expoſe themſelves. Theſe kind apprehenſions went ſtill farther; it was poſſible they might not eſcape the airs of inſolent ſuperiority and barbarous witticiſm of the preſent moment,

moment, from which the ſacred rights of hoſpitality might be unable to protect them: what then was the pleaſure and ſurpriſe of the whole little family group, when they had given the Owens a very gracious reception, to ſee her Grace make up to them with as much eaſy affability as ſhe would have done to ladies of her own acquaintance, or friends of her own chooſing!.

Lady Owen, at firſt, did not take more than her ſhare in the converſation; ſhe had felt herſelf a little overawed by the preſence of a ſtranger, whoſe title was ſomething to which ſhe had been hitherto unaccuſtomed, which made her extremely cautious of ſpeaking much, for fear

fear ſhe ſhould betray the very great joy ſhe could not but feel at getting higher and higher up the ladder of preferment: to be taken notice of by a Ducheſs, was more than her weak head could bear without growing giddy; ſhe therefore ſpoke with much circumſpection, till, by the artful management of this high-titled lady, her fears vaniſhed, and her reſerve melted away like ſnow before the ſun. Her Grace had the condeſcenſion to find ſo many things to admire in the dreſs of Lady Owen, ſo much to praiſe in the beauty of her daughter, that Lady Owen, who had hitherto looked up to the Counteſs of Uxington as the greateſt of all her acquaintance, and ſcarcely talked

talked of any body beſides her friend the Counteſs, now began to think a great deal leſs of her Ladyſhip's pretenſions to admiration or reſpect, when compared with a Ducheſs; and having got rid of every thing like diffidence, ſhe gave the reins to her volubility, and let it gallop away with all her diſcretion.

How happened it, madam, aſked her new friend, that your Ladyſhip was not at the opera laſt night? I thought your daughter quite a divinity, and ſo thought Lord Fitzhenry, or I am mightily miſtaken.

You are not miſtaken, madam, ſaid Fitzhenry, who was making love to

to the three young ladies in turn; I think your daughters, I think Miſs Owen, I think all handſome women are divinities, and worſhip them as ſuch, kneeling in the midſt of them.

You ſee how it is, Lady Owen, continued the ſly Ducheſs, caſting a ſignificant look at the mother of Fitzhenry, which look full of information was anſwered with another as full of incredulity; Miſs Owen, I ſuppoſe, madam, underſtands my Lord as well as he ſeems to underſtand her.

I dare to ſay, my Lady, replied the delighted widow of Sir Ogle, leering

leering on Fitzhenry and ſimpering, that all young ladies and young gentlemen do underſtand one another in the great world, ſuch as we live in; as to the vulgarer ſort of people, it is quite a different matter, for where there is not no quality on one ſide, nor no riches on the other, why they I believe come together without any underſtanding at all.

Your Ladyſhip, ſaid the Counteſs, mortified, yet hardly able to ſuppreſs a laugh, I imagine muſt have miſtaken her Grace's meaning.

Pardon me, Lady Uxington; I feel myſelf perfectly comprehended, retorted her Grace. Indeed I am ſo well

well convinced of what your Ladyſhip may ſuppoſe me to be quite ignorant, that, on the ſtrength of my diſcernment, I ſhall immediately have the honour to ſolicit the acquaintance of your friend Lady Owen, and her very lovely daughter, whom I ſhall expect your Ladyſhip will bring with you to my next aſſembly.

That is entirely out of my power, anſwered Lady Uxington a little peeviſhly; your Grace's night, I recollect is Thurſday, and my Lord has an engagement at home that evening.

Unlucky! cried the other. However,

ever, madam, addreſſing herſelf to Lady Owen, I ſhall ſend you my cards to-morrow, and if you cannot come yourſelf, I hope you will ſend me your fair daughter, and then I ſhall be *ſure* of Lord Fitzhenry at leaſt.

Lady Uxington did not hear this laſt impertinence: diſpleaſed and diſguſted, ſhe had gone over to the younger party, who were all liſtening to Miſs Owen's account of a court dreſs, which ſhe declared had kept her waking ſix weeks to fancy the ornaments for it, not having time by day to think upon any one thing that was ſerious.

Lady

Lady Owen replied to her Grace's polite invitation, whilſt her eyes followed the Counteſs with much ſatisfaction, finding her courage increaſe as her Ladyſhip retreated—Nothing, ſhe ſaid, would have made her ſo proud, as to wait on her Grace, and hoped, as Miſs Owen would have no call to go to court every day in the year, ſome other time ſhe ſhould be more fortunate.

Miſs Owen then, I preſume, goes to the drawing-room on Thurſday?

Indeed, my Lady, Miſs Owen *ave* been ſo *delarious* in not being *ercented*, that ſhe can't now put it off no longer. It is quite ſhocking to hear

hear oneſelf called out upon, in one's own aſſemblies, and concerts, and dinners, and ſuppers: Why ſure, my Lady Owen, you do not conſider Miſs Owen's rank, beauty, and two hundred thouſand pounds fortune, that you let her go about without being *percented*; for no young lady is nothing at all till ſhe have been *percented*. So you ſee, my lady, how it is, and may well ſuppoſe what a hurry ſcurry we ſhall all be in if we live till Thurſday comes: poor Miſs Owen is half dead with the buſtle we have had about it before the time.

This apology was addreſſed to her new friend by Lady Owen, with the ſame freedom as ſhe would have

have ſpoken to her houſe-keeper; and though the great Lady's features, talents and humour were all particularly arranged and diſpoſed for laughter-loving ridicule, ſhe had them ſo well under command, as not to *betray* even a ſmile, but what might have been conſtrued into the moſt perfect approbation; whilſt ſhe obſerved, that going to court need not prevent Miſs Owen from doing her the honour of gracing her aſſembly in the evening.

I cannot ſay directly, my Lady, how that may be, becauſe Miſs Owen, I ſuppoſe, if there is a ball, will ſtay for to partake of all that is going forwards. Miſs Owen is always ready

for a dance; and you know, my Lady, it might be taken amiſs if ſhe was to come away; for young ladies who have two hundred thouſand pound are not percented every day, or to be met with in every place.

Still her Grace's features were inflexibly ſteady: ſhe only begged leave to aſſure her Ladyſhip, there would be no ball at St. James's before the eighteenth of January; in conſequence of which aſſurance Lady Owen very joyfully accepted the flattering invitation for the following Thurſday.

The Ducheſs of Radſtock's views were

were generally ſo well covered as to eſcape common obſervation, and her preſent deſigns ſo much beyond the moſt accurate glance of penetration, that it may not be unneceſſary juſt to lift up the veil, and give my readers a peep into them. This Lady had no doubt in the world, but that Lord Fitzhenry wiſhed to ingraft his honours on the rich, beautiful, luxuriant branch of trade and knighthood; whilſt the *inſuperable* bar which his Lordſhip had declared fate to have placed between them, *ſhe* conſidered to be *family* objections to the connection. Moreover, her Grace had daughters for whom ſhe was ambitious, and ſons for whom ſhe was mercenary:

here was rank and fortune both ſlipping through her fingers, and ſhe was now reſolved to detain both in her own family, if it was poſſible to effect ſo capital a manœuvre.

I ſuppoſe, ſaid ſhe, your Ladyſhip is provided with a chaperone, or I ſhould be happy to offer my ſervices to preſent Miſs Owen.

Miſs Owen, my Lady, is very much obliged to you, and ſo is Lady Owen: but my Lady Fenton have aſked the favour before, and one does not like to refuſe perſons who owes one money any little matter of obligation that they axes one afterwards. My poor dear Sir Ogle

uſed

uſed to ſay, that *borrowers* always look for more ceremony than *lenders*: why that ſhould be, *you* nor *I*, my Lady, who does not mix with the *channel*, can neither of us make out; but Sir Ogle was one of your polite men that, by way of amuſement, ſometimes looked into his affairs.

A very commendable turn, Lady Owen, for a man who wiſhes to aggrandize his daughter by enabling her to match with nobility. Pray how long, madam, has Lord Fitzhenry been attached to Miſs Owen? Have his propoſals been made in form? and do Lord and Lady Uxington agree to them? I envy their happineſs, and I hope they are ſenſible of

it, to have ſuch a lovely young creature in view for their ſon, who is quite a raw youth, and has ſeen very little of the world: beſides, I am told, his inclinations are vaſtly unſteady.

The whole of this intereſting converſation paſſed in a remarkably low key; Lady Owen, by nature, had a whining voice, and the Ducheſs artfully lowered hers to a whiſper; ſo that it was impoſſible for the perſon neareſt them to find out what they were talking about: but before my Lady Owen could make any reply to her Grace's laſt ſtring of interrogations, Lord Uxington joined the party, gave them an account of the review,

review, from which he was but juſt returned, and the confidential conference was broken off, or, more properly ſpeaking, deferred to a better opportunity. Soon after the interruption, her Grace ſaid ſhe muſt aſk for her carriage; but had the condeſcenſion to yield precedency to her familiar friend the knight's lady, who deſired, if it made no difference, her coach might be called firſt, having other viſits to pay: beſides, Miſs Owen would want her jellies, want to go a-ſhopping, and want to dreſs; obſerving, that all young ladies' wants increaſed with their ſtature; which, whether her own or the obſervation of any body elſe, was certainly the wiſeſt one

that ever came from the lips of Lady Owen.

Soon after the morning and motley viſitors had taken themſelves off, ſome of the maſters who attended Lady Elizabeth and Jemima came to give them a leſſon. On theſe occaſions, the Counteſs never choſe to be abſent from her daughters, and Lord Fitzhenry was left alone with his father.

The Earl looked thoughtful, and, as thoughtful men are apt to do, walked about the room without ſeeming to know that any other perſon was preſent: but obſerving his ſon ſtealing up his hat, as if about to

to withdraw, which he purpoſed doing, that his preſence might be no impediment to his father's meditations, he ſaid: Fitzhenry, if you are not particularly engaged, I wiſh to detain you for a quarter of an hour. To which his Lordſhip replied with a great deal of intentional ſincerity, He would never form any engagement that ſhould interfere with his duty.

I have no reaſon to doubt your veracity, ſaid the Earl; and your aſſertions, at this period, convey to my mind more than common ſatisfaction, as I have been rather a little diſconcerted by a ſuppoſed

breach of confidence, if not of duty.

For Heaven's ſake, my dear father, explain the charge you have againſt me, that I may fully juſtify myſelf to your ſuſpicions.—He was neither alarmed nor confounded, he expected to have heard that the unguarded declaration he made the preceding day in —— ſquare, was got round to his father, and prepared himſelf to give it a turn more ludicrous than ſerious; but the craſh of worlds would hardly have affected him with equal aſtoniſhment, as did this queſtion from Lord Uxington :—Is your heart free from the influence of Miſs Melmoth's

moth's attractions?—His face anſwered in the negative, but his tongue was ſilent.

I am ſorry to read in your countenance, my ſon, ſtronger proofs that you have wanted confidence in your father, than any conveyed to me through the dirty channel of anonymous information.—Read, continued he, holding out a letter; read, on what grounds I have queſtioned you.—I received it ſince I went out this morning; it was put into my hands by a chairman: how he came by it I know not. When you have peruſed it, I ſhall depend on yourſelf for ingenuouſly pointing out to me ſuch parts of it as are founded on

reality: conſider me not as a ſevere judge, predetermined on condemnation; but a partial father, much more ready to acquit than condemn.

Fitzhenry, who in fact had no fault with which he could accuſe himſelf, but the involuntary one of loving without hope, adoring an object, which to know and not adore would have been to ſin againſt the powers of Beauty, the influence of Virtue, and Heaven's own attributes, which had taken up their radiant abode in the ſoul of Miſs Melmoth—as the effects of his firſt ſhock ſubſided, his recollection returned, and conſcious rectitude did not permit him to heſitate a moment

in

in opening the moſt ſecret receſſes of his heart to his tender generous father, who was ſo perfectly ſatisfied with the noble efforts Fitzhenry had exerted, ſo highly approved the whole tenor of his conduct, that, whilſt he ſtrongly recommended to him to perſevere till he ſhould have completed the victory over a paſſion every way unpromiſing, he did not command him to think no more of Miſs Melmoth, he did not bind himſelf by oath, that Fitzhenry ſhould never be the huſband of Miſs Melmoth.—What did he then?—why he left his grateful, his affectionate ſon the guardian of his own happineſs, and the maſter of his own deſtiny.

Fitzhenry

Fitzhenry refuſed to look into the contents of the letter Lord Uxington had put into his hand, till this intereſting conference was ended; chooſing, that the explanation he owed to duty ſhould have no ſiniſter foundation: and, as the motive was candid, ſo were the effects it produced on the mind of his father, great almoſt beyond example. It might be called the conteſt of generoſity and gratitude; for, when the father aboliſhed his own authority, the ſon was more than ever determined to abide by his obedience. Having ſeparated mutually ſatisfied with each other, Fitzhenry opened the anonymous letter, which contained theſe lines:

To

## TO THE EARL OF UXINGTON.

MY LORD,

A friend takes the liberty of acquainting you, that when your ſon was paying a viſit to Lord Wardour's family, he fell in love with a young woman, whoſe name is Melmoth. She is a rigid catholic, and your ſiſter's fate is enough to deter you from giving any encouragement to another ſuch unnatural alliance in your family: and if you are not already acquainted with your ſon's inclinations, it is high time that you ſhould know them. And further, it is the advice of a friend, who is deſirous to ſave you from an increaſe of domeſtic miſery, that you put a

ſpeedy

ſpeedy ſtop to your ſon's impending fate, and bind him, by your curſe, never to purſue Miſs Melmoth, who cannot ever be his, and will very ſoon be the wife of another.

ANONYMOUS.

Fitzhenry had much greater cauſe for pleaſure than pain from the conſequences produced by this evil-intended letter having fallen into the hands of his father: but ſtill his mind was torn, and his thoughts diſtracted.—Miſs Melmoth ſoon to be the wife of another—that other muſt be Lord Wardour—Had Lord Wardour deceived him?—certainly not—Lord Wardour had only liſtened to his own arguments, and been per-

ſuaded by them—It was himſelf who had ſtrengthened the ſight, who had awakened the ſenſibility of Lord Wardour; and now that the greateſt bar to his own ſucceſs was removed by his father's conceſſion, he execrated the romantic infatuation which had made him ſo active, as even to force that treaſure upon another who did not incline to accept it, the poſſeſſion of which would have been dearer to himſelf than exiſtence, and crowned his days with felicity.

Such were the reflections that tore the mind of Lord Fitzhenry—but what diſtracted his thoughts was the impoſſibility of finding out who had been the fabricator of the anonymous letter.—

letter.—There was not upon the face of the whole earth another human being who knew the ſecret of his attachment to Miſs Melmoth but Lord Wardour—Pauſe here, reader—conſider this circumſtance—conſider alſo the parity between love and jealouſy—if one awakens, can the other be lulled to repoſe?—and, when you diſcern the web that was laid by fatality for ſuſpicion to work on, give that honour due to the candour of Fitzhenry, who with noble ſcorn rejected the baſe idea of affixing to the character of another any blemiſh which he would have ſpurned at in his own. I will leave, ſaid he, the unravelment of this myſterious letter to time—I loved Wardour as my friend

friend—I will do more, I will not hate him as my rival—I cannot ceaſe to adore Miſs Melmoth—but I will teach my ſtubborn heart to feel only ſentiments of reſpect for the wife of Lord Wardour.

I cannot ceaſe to adore Miſs Melmoth, was the expreſſion of his heart; to wean himſelf from the attachment, was the counſel of wiſdom. In ſome degree he followed the dictates of both: when he thought of her, it was with adoration; but, to think of her as little as poſſible, he plunged deeper than ever into all the innocent gaieties that offered themſelves as local remedies to his hopeleſs ſituation. He was leſs at home than

than before the explanation, and preferred the company of his ſiſters, who were not in his confidence, to the ſociety of his parents, who were: the lively ſallies of the former helped him forward in the difficult taſk of forgetfulneſs; the tender participation of the latter unfitted him for the conteſt. They would ſacrifice every thing to him, and ſhould he ſacrifice nothing to them?—He had no merit in giving up an alliance that it was now impoſſible to effect; but in appearing to give it up with cheerfulneſs he ſuppoſed himſelf greater than Scipio.

In purſuit of a cure, he often viſited in —— ſquare, ſo often indeed that

that her Grace began to entertain hopes not much to the honour of his fidelity. The fair Clarinda, ſhe had been aſſured by Lady Owen herſelf, was to be married to Lord Fitzhenry, when he came back from his travels: Not, ſhe ſaid, that they had entruſted her with their intentions, becauſe they choſe to ſurpriſe her, as well as all the reſt of the world, by an unexpected wedding. But I know better things, added ſhe, and could have told you, my Lady, how it would be, when I ſaw them both ready to die for love the very firſt time they ever ſet eyes on one another.——Her Grace ſuppoſed all this to be exactly true; but, inſtead of being diſcouraged, ſhe redoubled her

attentions

attentions to both parties, firmly perſuaded from experience, that nothing was ſo eaſy as to put aſunder thoſe who happen not to be finally joined together.

It has been always allowed by the faculty, that there is more danger in a relapſe, than in the firſt ſtage of a fever; and if love is a fever either of the heart or the brain, why may not the ſame conſequences be expected?—Fitzhenry had already in imagination crowned himſelf with the laurels of victory, when a large packet from Wales overturned all his ideal conqueſt, and convinced him he was a ſlave, at the inſtant he ſuppoſed himſelf to be a conqueror.—

The

The ſight of Lord Wardour's writing on the ſuperſcription ſuſpended his faculties for a moment—he looked again—heſitated—coloured—turned pale—trembled—and at laſt broke open the ſeal, a martyr to ſuſpenſe, yet fainting at the approach of certainty.—The firſt two lines which met his eager enquiries had like to have deſtroyed him—it was this—The poſſeſſion of Miſs Melmoth's heart and perſon, eſtimable and beautiful as they are—Fitzhenry could read no farther; he daſhed the papers on the floor, threw himſelf into a chair, his eyes borrowed from his ſoul a few drops of weakneſs, which might have convinced thoſe who do not know it already, that there

there is no mind, however great or manly, that is at all times guarded againſt the ſurpriſes of ſenſibility.—What a blockhead I am! he exclaimed—ſhe is married—or going to be married—Be it ſo—what is there in Miſs Melmoth's marriage that ſhould ſurpriſe or afflict me?—But I will know the worſt, cried he, and again ſnatched up the letter—Theſe were the contents:

LETTER.

The poſſeſſion of Miſs Melmoth's heart and perſon, eſtimable and beautiful as they are, dear Fitzhenry, would have been far from completing my happineſs, if the conſequence of being happy muſt have occaſioned your

your defeat and mortification; had I even ſeen with paſſion thoſe charms which I now only behold with brotherly kindneſs, ſtill I would have periſhed in my own flames, rather than build my felicity on your infelicity. I lay you under no ſuch obligation in the preſent caſe; but though I have no ſacrifice of inclination to offer at the ſhrine of friendſhip; I have been the guardian of your intereſt, and the returns I have to make you are not inconſiderable, at leaſt if you can find either conſolation or profit in ſomething more than the good opinion of Miſs Melmoth: my letter muſt be a long one; I therefore keep this piece of intelligence till I draw towards a conclu-

ſion, to give the whole a better chance of being honoured with a patient peruſal.

Could you really imagine, Fitzhenry, that I was ſo little ſkilled in the ſoul's language as to read for it mere lip language? Can you ſuppoſe that whilſt you deceived yourſelf you could deceive me alſo? did you really wiſh that I ſhould marry Miſs Melmoth, when you adviſed me to marry her? If ſuch were your wiſhes as well as your inſtructions, I am leſs than a novice and you more than a cynic.—To love Miſs Melmoth with moderation I muſt ſuppoſe to be impoſſible: another had ſuperſeded her in my affections, or I might have

have averred it impoſſible from my own experience.—You have owned to me that you have loved her—how then will you exculpate yourſelf from the charge of loving her to adoration?—I am not to be impoſed on, Fitzhenry—I revere the honourable motive which led you into the miſtake of ſuppoſing you could plead the cauſe of another againſt yourſelf.—There are only two diſengaged women that I know of in this nation, to whom Lord Fitzhenry may not make pretenſions with the moſt flattering proſpects of ſucceſs: one of the ſacred two has long been the idol of my ſoul's affection; your intereſt and mine, my Lord, can never interfere, though I may ſome day call

upon you to exert your beſt influence in my favour.

I am about to give you a ſhort hiſtory of my family connections, with that of Miſs Melmoth's, and the engagements entered into by them, which we are both reſolutely determined never to ratify. For this confeſſion, I have reaſons which you do not now ſuſpect, and it is time enough to declare them when I am a free man; at preſent I am not my own maſter—the ſhattered health and worſe ſpirits of my only ſurviving parent keep me ſilent—I muſt ſee her reſtored to peace and ſtrength before I venture to unfold the ſecrets of my mind to her ear.—

Fitzhenry,

Fitzhenry, I am ſhocked at the diſ-appointments, for which, by delay, I am hoping to prepare this dear, this tender mother; it may be many months before I diſcloſe my eſtabliſh-ed opinions. Truth and conviction—who can withſtand them?—But this is not the hiſtory I have promiſed you;—if you do not find it brilliant or entertaining, it is becauſe there are no ſcenes of paſſion with which I can poſſibly enliven it.

When I firſt ſpoke to you on the ſubject of my entanglement, I told you at what an early age Mrs. Mel-moth brought her niece to ſettle in the neighbourhood of my father—of the intimacy that ſucceeded—and ex-

plained to you the attachment which has ſince that time ever ſubſiſted between the two houſes. I am four years older than Miſs Melmoth; I perfectly remember when I firſt ſaw her in the arms of her aunt, and was bid to call her my little wife; I have ſince heard my mother ſay, ſhe was at that time only two months old. The firſt word ſhe was taught to pronounce, was the name of your friend; and the firſt ſentence—I love you.—But this was the language of parrots, not of inſpiration or anticipation.

Every day for ſix years the ſame leſſon was repeated to me, that I muſt love Miſs Melmoth, and never do

do or ſay any thing that might diſpleaſe her. The fear of offending grew into habit, but it did not fit the ſhape of my mind, and I diſliked the child who was often a reſtraint on the exerciſes in which I delighted. She on her part was threatened with my diſpleaſure for the ſmalleſt offence—by which ill management our diſguſt to each other was perfectly mutual.—Still we were conſtantly reminded of the union for which we were intended;—we never met without quarrelling, or parted without anger;—a happy preſage of matrimonial comfort:—but here let me do juſtice to the moſt amiable temper in the world, and confeſs myſelf entirely to blame in all our little

ſkirmiſhes. Do not hate me, Fitzhenry, for the ſins of my childhood: but it is impoſſible to tell you the wicked gratification of my miſchievous heart, whenever I could teaſe and torment the unoffending being ſo dear to you, and now ſo revered by me.

My father was the friend of Lord Hillford, the huſband of your unfortunate aunt. I did not know that ſhe was the ſiſter of your father, or any relation to the family. Your letter from Mount Clear gave me the firſt impreſſion of a fact that has ſince been aſcertained by my mother, who knew and loved Lady Hillford. Their acquaintance commenced in Ireland,

Ireland, but was too ſoon interrupted by the removal of my parents to Northangle.—I have wavered ſo long from the point to which I was bound, that I muſt, by way of bringing my ſubject together, again repeat to you, that my father was the friend of Lord Hillford, and that not knowing what to do with me at home, he ſent me to a college near the reſidence of Lord Hillford, whoſe eſtabliſhment was then at Nice; and under his Lordſhip's auſpices, I purſued my ſtudies from ten to fifteen, when your aunt being adviſed to try the air of Naples for a languiſhing indiſpoſition, my Lord attended her there, and my father ordered me home.—I was too much of a boy at ſo early

a period of my life, to pay much attention to any thing beſides my book and my ſports; the one by neceſſity, the other by choice: but I perfectly recollect that I received great kindneſs from Lord Hillford, and the tendereſt attentions from his Lady; and that I repaid her for them, with almoſt filial affection. She appeared happy:—had I then known it was only in appearance that ſhe was happy, my heart is not ſo *impenetrable* as to have withheld its firſt offerings of ſympathy to ſuffering excellence, like hers: the ſeeds of ſuſceptibility, that nature has ſown in my heart, her ſorrows would have matured.—I would ſay much more on the wrongs of this lovely

lovely and beloved martyr; but a ſenſe of favours commands me to be ſilent: I love Lady Hillford, I alſo am indebted for many obligations to Lord Hillford.

On my return to Northangle, I found Miſs Melmoth advanced five years in height, in grace and in lovelineſs; yet ſtill ſhe was a child, and though beautiful as an angel, my heart felt no predilection in her favour; yet now it was fully revealed to me, that it could never make another choice without my incurring a denunciation which I would not have incurred for the univerſe.

During the twelve months I re-

mained at home, I often called myſelf to account for that repugnance which I felt to obey the will of my father—it muſt be obeyed—I thought too that it ſhould be obeyed—but determined this laſt proof of my obedience ſhould be delayed to the lateſt moment. I grew tired of Wales: I have confeſſed I did not like Miſs Melmoth; ſhe was a chit, a baby,—how could I like Miſs Melmoth? I hated her cunning aunt; ſhe reſembled a witch, and in my thoughts I accuſed her of having caſt her ſpells around us all, intoxicated my father, infatuated my mother, and made me the prey of her ambitious artifices.—I deſired to get rid of my torments at any rate, and ſolicited

ſolicited for a removal to Eton:—my father conſented; my tutor accompanied me to college, from which æra I date the happieſt event of my life. I had there the honour to cultivate your friendſhip, and was by your means introduced to the whole of Lord Uxington's family. Oh! Fitzhenry, do you think I ſhall ever forget the delicious fortnight which your father, mother, ſiſters, William Montreville, Montague Davenport, you, and I, once enjoyed at Sir Thomas Montreville's caſtle in ——ſhire, or the many, many ſtill more ſweet and delicious days we have ſince paſſed together at Uxington Lodge? You may have forgotten, but I never ſhall forget them.

On

On my ſecond viſit to Northangle, I had completed my eighteenth year; Miſs Melmoth her fourteenth: ſhe was then all that heaven and nature could make her. I confeſſed her beauty, her wit, her propriety, her underſtanding, her accompliſhments —I confeſſed them all with that unimpaſſioned fondeſs I ſhould have beſtowed on a darling ſiſter. My father and mother miſtook the ſentiment, they were more than ſatisfied —they were happy. The deception was neither premeditated nor intentional—I gave thoſe praiſes to Miſs Melmoth, which it would have been the height of injuſtice to withhold; but a new obſtacle had ariſen to my forming any ſentiments for this

this charming girl, warmer than thoſe of fraternal admiration, eſteem and affection. I had no longer a heart to offer her—mine had played the truant, and deſerted on a ſecret ſervice: had it returned with me to Wales, I ſhould certainly have forced it to fall at the feet of Miſs Melmoth.—What then?—Miſs Melmoth would not have condeſcended to accept a ſacrifice ſo ungraciouſly offered.—Of this truth I mean to convince you before I put the finiſhing line to my voluminous packet—after-circumſtances may ſhew you, Fitzhenry, hardly as your patience muſt be put to the trial, that for my own ſake it is incumbent on me to be perfectly explicit, however little you may

may at preſent think yourſelf concerned in my adventures.

Fitzhenry pauſed at the concluſion of the laſt ſentence. There are ſenſations to which the mind of man is acceſſible, that do not admit of deſcription; and amongſt the indeſcriptible number may be claſſed the various emotions which revolved in that of his Lordſhip from firſt ſeeing the hand writing of his friend Wardour on the ſuperſcription, to that part of the letter at which he ſtopped to give himſelf a moment for conſideration; but ſtill his thoughts were all dancing the hays in ſo joyful a ſtate of confuſion, that though he fancied he ſaw many reſolvable hints

hints in ſome of Lord Wardour's expreſſions, yet he knew not how to arrange them, nor could he even comprehend what they meant, ſo clearly as many readers have doubtleſs already done without my aſſiſtance.—He reverted again to Lord Wardour's epiſtle:—let us do ſo likewiſe.

*Continuation of the Letter.*

By this time, Fitzhenry, I had found out that it was not the unripened beauties of Miſs Melmoth, to which my heart formed objections: no, it had ſurrendered to another as young as Miſs Melmoth, and to that other alone will ever conſent to unite itſelf—but underſtand

ſtand me clearly—this was not the language I ſpoke in the life time of my father: I did not then even preſume to give hope a place in the moſt retired of my thoughts; on the contrary, I reſolved never to offend him, and rather to be unhappy myſelf, than occaſion him unhappineſs.

I remained with my family ſeveral months: Mrs. Melmoth and her niece were our conſtant aſſociates, and we ſeemed cut off from all the reſt of the world; the former I never could like, the latter it was impoſſible not to eſteem; her thouſand charms, her million powers of charming were ſeen by me with indifference; but the innocent unreſerve of her manners, the ingenuous

ingenuous frankneſs of her diſpoſition, made large demands on my fraternal affections, and I anſwered them all.—She was paſt the days of abſolute childhood, and it is probable, from the ſiſterly freedom with which ſhe condeſcended to treat me, ſhe had ceaſed to remember the nurſery tales of a union which were no longer repeated: ſhe claimed me as a brother, and in that character I have aſſured her of my tendereſt protection.—The compliment of ſilence paid to her ſex and delicacy was not extended to your friend; my father had ſettled every thing for our eſtabliſhment; and by him I was informed that, when of age, I ſhould be at liberty to addreſs Miſs Melmoth, till which time

time I might diſpoſe of myſelf as I thought proper. Guefs if this indulgence did not in a great meaſure make up for the diſagreeable condition which was annexed to it: at leaſt it would afford me many opportunities of delay: and protraction, in ſome certain ſituations, may be called a ſecond if not a firſt-rate bleſſing. I laid my plans accordingly—I ſet out with viſiting every part of Wales, with which I was not before acquainted, and contrived to manage ſo adroitly, as to expend ſix ſummer months on my firſt expedition. The following winter I paſſed with my family, and though I did not meet Miſs Melmoth with the ardours

dours of a lover, I beheld her with the affection of a friend.

Early in the ſpring I paſſed over to Ireland, and made the tour of that country, from one end of it to the other; by which ingenious device I contrived to diſſipate as much of my limited time as brought my father's matrimonial views into the compaſs of ſix months, but put back my own to a greater diſtance than ever.—I have now, ſaid I, made myſelf acquainted with two of the extraneous branches of our nation:—my next viſit ſhall be to Scotland; and afterwards a tour through the mother country will for the preſent finiſh my travels. My father aſked if it

was

was poſſible to do ſo much in ſo ſhort a time; and it was with difficulty I perſuaded him to let me try the experiment. I ſaw you on my arrival in England: you had the goodneſs to take me to your family: with what ſorrow did I quit it, with what regret permit you to go to Wales without me! Do you ſee my motive for this ſelf-denial? My time was come, but my inclinations were wandering far, very far from Miſs Melmoth. Oh! Fitzhenry, had I foreſeen the blow that fate ſuſpended over my head—could I have divined that I had embraced my dear father for the laſt time—this is a ſubject that grieves my penitent ſoul—I will have no more of it; but haſten to

another better calculated to amuſe thoughts, and perhaps to gratify your inclinations.

On my return to Northangle, the ladies, who had before the goodneſs to adminiſter comfort to my diſconſolate mother, retired to their own houſe; and of courſe nothing has yet been ſaid by her or Mrs. Melmoth which has any tendency to the old plans of operation. I found Miſs Melmoth's ſpirits much depreſſed; I attributed the abſence of her charming vivacity to a natural cauſe. My dear father was paſſionately fond of her: the ſorrow ſhe expreſſed for his loſs, the melancholy it impreſſed on her features, added intereſt to beauty,

beauty, and did honour to the exquiſite ſenſibility of her nature: if you are offended with the warmth of my language, remember I uſe it to ſecure my own perſonal ſafety; for would you not cut the throat of that man who could adopt any other when ſpeaking or writing of Miſs Melmoth?—Can you ſurmiſe that I have made this amiable girl the confidante of my paſſion for another? The name and connections of that other are the only part of the ſecret I have kept to myſelf; I reſerve both in the *core* of my heart till I have paved the way to a ſucceſsful diſcloſure of them.

Yeſterday I made my confeſſion, and after I had made it, aſked if ſhe could

could pardon me for having ſurrendered my heart to any other than herſelf. She ſtretched out her beautiful hand in token of amity, and without confuſion or agitation aſſured me, with the moſt faſcinating candour, that ſhe had always conſidered me ſo ſtrongly in the light of a brother, that, if I had honoured her with any other ſort of affection, ſhe would frankly confeſs it never could have been returned by her. In the ſacred character ſo ſweetly encouraged to lay hold of, I ventured to demand, as a proof of her ſiſterly regard, that ſhe would repay my confidence with her own, and tell me what ſhe thought of a certain friend of mine. At the name of Fitzhenry, her eloquent

blood, which before only ſoftly glided through her tranſparent veins, ruſhed impetuouſly into them, and overflowed the lily of her complexion; the very tone of her voice was altered; it was more plaintive and leſs ſteady than when ſhe declared ſhe could never have been the wife of Wardour.—Fitzhenry, I know the bias of her pure inclinations; it would be ungenerous to communicate all that I do know;—you have no reaſon to deſpair; but the ſubſtance of our converſation I ſhall not report even to you. Perhaps I have not acted ſo cautiouſly by the affairs of your heart—I confeſs the charge, and that I made uſe of your ſecret as a decoy to catch the innocent effuſions of her ingenuous

ingenuous ſoul.—I meant well—I think myſelf entitled to your pardon, and not only to your pardon, but your acknowledgments.—Whatever you ſay in my favour to your dear family, it ſhall be the buſineſs of my whole life to ratify—and to deſerve their approbation.—Tell them this—and tell Lady Eli——No, no, tell her nothing, but that her brother has not a truer friend in the world than her—piſh!—his

WARDOUR.

The firſt queſtion Lord Fitzhenry aſked of himſelf when his thoughts were enough at liberty to be capable of reflection, was this: Shall I have any concealments from my father and

mother? The anſwer was a negative: he carried them the letter, examined their countenances as they peruſed the contents, and ſaw with joy more of pleaſure than diſapprobation marked on them.—Fitzhenry, ſaid the Earl, you could not have obliged us more than by repoſing your confidence on our indulgence—aſſure yourſelf of every thing that it is in our power to do, conducive to your happineſs; it is the leaſt return we can make you for the truſt you repoſe in us.—Certainly, cried the Counteſs, for are we not the friends as well as the parents of our children?

Fitzhenry would have ſpoke, to teſtify his gratitude, but his father ſtopped

ſtopped him by taking up the ſubject where Lady Uxington had dropped it.—To have inſpired you, my ſon, merely with the ſentiments of duty and reverence, would not have ſatiſfied our demands on your heart; but your conduct agreeably convinces us that we poſſeſs more.—Duty may be irkſome, and reverence cold; it is friendſhip only that can inſpire the one with eaſe, the other with warmth.

How exactly you are deſcribing the picture of my mind by your own! ſaid the Counteſs: I have thought of nothing, my dear ſon, but of your Miſs Melmoth ever ſince you firſt deſcribed her to me; may ſhe be yours!—may you be happy!—for

you deſerve to be happy. Fitzhenry gracefully, with a bent knee, preſſed to his lips and to his boſom the hands of theſe affectionate parents:—I have the ſame ſort of predilection for Miſs Melmoth, rejoined his father, as he raiſed him up; but from whence it proceeds, I know not, except it be from that ſort of ſympathy which inſtructs us to love thoſe who are dear to thoſe we love. Her want of fortune will be no objection; there is but one obſtacle; if that could be removed, I ſhould be ſatisfied; if it cannot, I will be contented.

I have thought it proper to give ſo much of the converſation, as might ſhew the powers veſted by Lord and Lady

Lady Uxington in their beloved ſon: more would be unneceſſary, unleſs it be merely to ſay that he received their ſanction to his making a ſhort viſit to Lord Wardour, prior to commencing his continental expedition; but under the reſtriction of entering into no ſerious engagements till his return from his travels. The ſight of parents is often as keen and always more clear than the ſight of lovers is commonly repreſented; and ſuch hints in the letter, as had been partially ſeen by Fitzhenry through the obſcure of contending emotions, when viewed by the eyes of deliberate reaſon, appeared fully exemplified to the underſtanding of Lord and Lady Uxington: they admired Lord War-

dour; they ſaw Lord Wardour loved their daughter: ſuch an eſtabliſhment for Lady Elizabeth was in every point of view deſirable; and theſe words in his letter, which were reconſidered more than once—"truth and conviction who can withſtand?"—gave them room to hope an alliance with him was likely at a diſtant period to take place, as they could not but ſuppoſe, when he made uſe of the ſtrong expreſſion, he adverted to ſome concealed change which had happened in his own religious opinions. To a Catholic, Lord Uxington never would have given her hand; that bar removed, of all mankind Lord Wardour would have been his choice for Lady Elizabeth: the caſe of his ſon

ſon was different; huſbands would take care of themſelves, but wives were captive and defenceleſs; it was the miſerable fate of Lady Hillford which had taught him to make the diſtinction. In the mean time, Lady Elizabeth was not to be ſpoken to on the ſubject, as it was poſſible many things might ariſe to make them loſe ſight of ſo diſtant a union; but Fitzhenry, who was certainly indebted for ſuch an act of kindneſs to his friend, exacted a promiſe from his mother, that if his ſiſter was addreſſed, as might be the caſe, by any other man, before Lord Wardour was at liberty to declare himſelf, ſhe ſhould then be informed of his attachment to her; that if he ſhould

be ſo unfortunate as to fail in the purſuit, his infelicity might not be a matter of chance, but the work of judgment. A requeſt ſo reaſonable could not but meet with all the indulgence it merited.

It is impoſſible to give an adequate deſcription of the pleaſure, the joy, and the happineſs that reigned in this houſe of comfort, where all the ſocial virtues had taken up their abode, and where magnificence was conſidered in no other light than a troubleſome gueſt, whom it was proper ſometimes to entertain, though ſhe was never welcome. Mr. Courtenay joined them the laſt week in December; and the nineteenth of January

was

was the day fixed upon for a ſeparation that would be ſeverely felt by all the parties. Lady Uxington had promiſed her young people a farewel ball, which was fixed for the thirteenth; cards were already ſent out, and the Owens were not omitted.

When Fitzhenry anſwered Lord Wardour, he ſaid all that a man penetrated by love and friendſhip could ſay; but, as he intended to take him by ſurpriſe, was ſilent on the ſubject of his intended excurſion to Wales. He had not received a ſecond letter from his Lordſhip, though a month had elapſed, which created him ſome uneaſineſs. In the laſt week he had ſent letter after letter,

to aſk what was the matter—but no reply came—his uneaſineſs increaſed—he feared ſomething—he feared every thing—yet without knowing what it was that he did fear.—He would go himſelf.—His father, who had already conſented that he ſhould once more ſee Miſs Melmoth before he quitted England, did not reſtrain him in point of time; he ſet out, leaving Mr. Courtenay ſo happily diſpoſed of in Lord Uxington's family circle, that the apology he thought it proper to make for his ſhort abſence, appeared to be almoſt unneceſſary.

The ideas which he made the companions of his journey, were not of

of that pleaſant kind one might ſuppoſe a lover to entertain, who at every ſtep was drawing nearer to the preſence of a beloved object, and his perplexities very much increaſed, to perceive, as he came within view of Mrs. Melmoth's houſe, all the windows of it were ſhut; and that Northangle hung out the ſame ſignals of deſolation. His ſervant knocked at the door of the latter; he repeated the ſummons ſeveral times before any body appeared to anſwer it; at length an old Welch woman, opening the door half-way, ſaid ſomething which neither the man nor his maſter underſtood, and would have ſhut it again, if Fitzhenry had not diſmounted, caught hold of her gown, and by force

force detained her:—ſhe ſeemed at firſt to have no ſenſation but what proceeded from terror; when finding they intended to do her no harm, ſhe recovered from her fright enough to make them comprehend by her motions that the families were both gone from thence, and herſelf left to take care of the houſes: ſhe alſo pointed to the ſea, and held up firſt three, then four fingers, which Fitzhenry conſtrued into their being removed ſomewhere on the coaſt, and that they were not expected to return in three or four weeks; he concluded they were trying ſea-air and bathing for the healthful benefit of one or other of them; and trembled leſt it ſhould be Miſs Melmoth.

The ſequeſtered ſituation of theſe houſes, which had no neighbourhood but with peaſants whoſe jargon was to him incomprehenſible, and the very few days to which his leave of abſence was limited, obliged him to rejoin his family wholly uninformed, two thirds diſcontented, and more than half miſerable. The deranged ſtate of his thoughts he concealed for his own private amuſement, ſlightly ſpoke of the diſappointment he had met with to his parents; and as to his ſiſters, they knew nothing of the occaſion on which he had abſented himſelf.

With all the diſpatch it was in his power to make, he only arrived in town

town on the twelfth of December, late in the evening. The ball was to be on the day following. He found Lady Elizabeth almoſt as unconcerned about the matter as he was inclined to be; but he alſo ſaw Jemima preparing for the great event, with ſo much vivacity as diſturbed the whole houſe: ſhe was already provided with a partner; Courtenay was to have the honour of dancing with her; and the arrangement of her appearance kept her in perpetual motion; it was the firſt opportunity that had offered of exhibiting her pretty perſon in any thing like a public point of view. When we ſee young people eagerly purſuing after pleaſure, much is to be ſaid on the ſcore

of

of novelty, but not a ſyllable in favour of habit. The indefatigable Jemima was as buſy in preparing for her ſiſter as for herſelf; every thing was left to her taſte, and ſhe acquitted herſelf of the office with infinite *eclat*.

The Ducheſs of Radſtock ſtill cheriſhed her former opinion reſpecting Fitzhenry's attachment to Miſs Owen, but was forced to relinquiſh her hopes of detaching him from the purſuit, or rather to poſtpone the *finale* of her plans till he ſhould come back from his travels, by which time it was her intention that he ſhould not find Miſs Owen diſengaged; ſhe would do extremely well for her ſecond or third ſon,

ſon, whoſe fortunes muſt be ſmall. Such an alliance never entered into her head for the eldeſt: beſides, had ſhe thought of it, he was a noble-ſpirited youth, who would not have heſitated to have told her Grace he had a right to pleaſe himſelf as his father had done before him.

At ſome of the ſcore of dinners, which had been expended to ſo little profit on Lord Fitzhenry, Lady Owen had exhibited her vulgarity, and Miſs Owen flouriſhed off her beauty. Her Grace wiſhed to have left the former out of her parties: but that would have been highly impolitic, as ſhe was ſole guardian to the latter, and ſuppoſed to have greater powers over the diſpo-

diſpoſition of her daughter's perſon and fortune than was really the caſe; ſo that her Grace thought it better to be ridiculed for the choice ſhe made of her company, than run the riſk of loſing ſo rich a prize out of her family. She had propoſed the heireſs to Lord John—I had rather marry a wax doll, was his reply—neither will do out of a glaſs caſe—one has as much animation as the other—and the want of ſpeech would be a recommendation, as I could not be expoſed by her folly, or bluſh for her affectation.

Lord William had more worldly wiſdom than either of his elder brothers; he ſaid he admired Miſs Owen; and

and it is certain that whenever he looked at or thought of her, he felt the moſt perfect adoration for thoſe attractive charms which lay in the hands of her bankers, and of which nobody knew the value better than himſelf. True love, wiſe folks ſay, makes all men diffident: the paſſion of Lord William for two hundred thouſand pounds was ſincere as fervent; no wonder then that this vaſt oppreſſion of ſentiment ſhould produce timidity, and that not being able himſelf to ſolicit the honour of her hand at Lady Uxington's ball, he ſhould requeſt his mother that ſhe would endeavour to obtain for him the ſupreme happineſs for which he languiſhed. Nothing could pleaſe her Grace

Grace better than being employed on ſuch an errand; and on the morning of the ball, going out on the ſecret expedition, quite alone, ſhe ordered her carriage to Harley-Street.

Lady Owen, who had now been long enough converſant with this great perſon, and obſervant of the title with which it was common to addreſs people of her rank, reflected with ſome concern that ſhe muſt have betrayed a certain deficiency in that ſort of knowledge to which ſhe chiefly aſpired, when in her firſt and even ſecond interview ſhe had in common converſation only called her *My Lady;* and to repair this unfortunate miſtake, ſhe reſolved ever after

after to addreſs her by the full high-ſounding title of my Lady Ducheſs, and to uſe it as often as ever ſhe could, that the world might be convinced ſhe knew the full *etiquette* of polite breeding as well as themſelves. Her former error had ſo much confuſed her, that, to get out of it as well as ſhe could, ſhe had aſſured my Lady Ducheſs that ſhe did not know ſhe was a Ducheſs when ſhe met her at Lady Uxington's, nor for ſeveral days afterwards, or ſhe ſhould certainly have paid her much more reſpect than it was proper to pay a Counteſs.

When her Grace ſtopped at the door to deliver the requeſt from Lord

William, ſhe bade her ſervants inquire only for Miſs Owen, becauſe the buſineſs ſhe came upon demanded more immediately the ear of the young lady than her mother; and on the porter's ſaying ſhe was not at home, was going away, but ſtopped on hearing Lady Owen calling from the top of the ſtairs—Lady Owen is at home—tell my Lady Ducheſs that Lady Owen will be mighty happy if my Lady Ducheſs will do her the honour to come up. The Ducheſs, who could not reſiſt the preſſing invitation of my Lady Owen, got out, followed the ſervant up ſtairs, and the greetings on both ſides were truly cordial—my Lady Ducheſs held out her hand, and my Lady Owen ſhook

it

it very heartily, a freedom their great intimacy warranted.——I am quite vexed, ſaid her Grace, not to find Miſs Owen at home, as I am charged with a meſſage to her from one of my ſons.

I wonder now, my Lady Ducheſs, which of the young Lords it may be; for really, my Lady Ducheſs, you have ſo many noblemen belonging to you, that I can't for my life gueſs which of them have ſent a meſſage to Miſs Owen.

It is my ſon William, madam, who, I aſſure you, is a very great admirer of your daughter, and deſires to be her partner at Lady Uxington's ball.

ball; will you have the goodneſs to tell her this when ſhe comes back? for I am not able to ſtay two minutes. —Pray tell her Lord William will break his heart if ſhe refuſes him.

That would be quite ſhocking, my Lady Ducheſs, but I hope better things, for no young gentlemen don't now break their hearts for young ladies.

But I aſſure you, Lady Owen, my ſon is very ſeriouſly attached to your daughter.

My dear Lady Ducheſs, Miſs Owen is highly obliged to his Lord-

ſhip, and if it was not for Lord Fitz-henry—

Why ſure, Lady Owen, interrupting her, ſhe cannot be engaged to dance with him—he returned to town but laſt night—unleſs indeed he has been to wait on her this morning.

No, no, my Lady Ducheſs, he has not been in Harley-ſtreet, but I know they are always agreed to dance together, meet where they will.

Well, but my ſon may come in for the two ſecond if not for the firſt—It would be rather particular, madam, and give me leave to add, abſurd,

abſurd, for Miſs Owen to think of dancing more than two dances with the ſame partner.

Yet what can one ſay, my Lady Ducheſs, when young ladies are in love with young gentlemen, and young gentlemen in love with young ladies? what can be ſaid if they will not give up one another as long as they have a ſhoe to their foot?

I ſhould ſay they were a couple of fools, cried her Grace; very much enraged at the ill ſucceſs of her negotiation, rang the bell, called for her carriage, and bidding my Lady Owen a contemptuous farewel, flounced out of the houſe in a pet. When

Miſs Clarinda came home, Lady Owen repreſented to her whatever had paſſed between my Lady Ducheſs and herſelf, and received the feeble-toned applauſes of her exquiſitely refined daughter, who declared ſhe could think of no other man but Lord Fitzhenry, as a partner at the ball, or a partner for life, and had no reaſon to doubt that he was equally determined to think of no other woman than herſelf.

The Counteſs's doors were to open at nine—ſo the cards of invitation announced: and in five minutes after, Lady Owen's chair, followed by her daughter's, were both ſet down in the hall; they were of courſe the firſt on the

the liſt of arrivals, and found only the ladies of the family aſſembled—the gentlemen had not yet riſen from table. The dreſs of Clarinda was exceeding ſplendid and not inelegant, her *tout enſemble* perfectly pretty but perfectly unintereſting. Not ſo my Lady Owen: it was impoſſible to look at her load of ill-choſen finery without being intereſted to know how ſhe would be able to move under it. The dreſs of Lady Uxington and her daughters afforded a contraſt equally ſtriking with what was to be found in their unaffected manners, eaſy movement, and unembarraſſed addreſs. My Lady Owen's red and green ſtriped ſatin would provoke one to cry out with Solomon—"and

ſtripes for the backs of fools;"—nor would the foil and glitter which covered every particular ſtripe have ſoftened the ſentence, or prevented the application.

Lady Owen firſt looked on her own richneſs, then on the plainneſs of Lady Uxington's apparel, and admired the colour (brown) of the ſatin; but fancied a little pink, or gold, or ſilver gave a mighty lightſome look to things in dark dull weather, eſpecially when people of condition could afford to wear them: it is not every body, my lady, ſaid ſhe, that have got your abilities and mine for wearing what is ſuitable to our rank: for inſtance, now there is my

Lady

Lady Fenton, who, becauſe ſhe is a lady, might think herſelf like one of us – but I never won't allow that a lady, whoſe lord is up head and ears in debt to other people, ſhould perſume for to wear ſuch things as my Lady Uxington or my Lady Owen.

I beg your Ladyſhip's pardon, replied the Counteſs; I make but one diſtinction on the article of dreſs, which is, that if all mothers who have grown-up daughters would reſign their ornaments to them, and be content with exact neatneſs in their own perſons, we ſhould act much more like rational beings than we do at preſent.

It was a ſenſible obſervation, and almoſt a pity that it ſhould have been thrown away on Lady Owen, who remarked that, if there was money enough for both, ſhe did not ſee no impropriety why ladies who were not much older than their daughters ſhould not dreſs as well as they did. The arrival of more company put an end to the ſubject. The young people had been engaged a different way—Miſs Owen ſaid ſo much in praiſe of the natural roſes which adorned the fair boſoms of Elizabeth and Jemima, that they had good-naturedly taken her into another apartment, where a profuſion of them were blowing on their native trees, and decorated her with a noſegay, as fine or finer than their

their own. Now, that is vaſtly clever, cried Lady Owen (who had joined them whilſt the Counteſs was receiving her other friends), you have made Miſs Owen, my Ladies, as fine as a queen; young ladies ſhould ſet off one another, for what do it ſignify to be envious? there are enough young gentlemen for you all, I durſt to ſay; but pray, my Ladies, what is become of my Lord? do you know, Miſs Owen nor I have never ſet our eyes upon him ſince we came into the houſe? he is a mighty pretty gentleman, indeed, to give himſelf ſo little trouble about the ladies! I wonder if he do expect for us to come a courting to him?—Does your Ladyſhip mean my father, or my brother? aſked

Lady Elizabeth.—Before an anſwer could be returned, Lord Fitzhenry made his appearance with Mr. Courtenay, and a great deal of other company ruſhed in at the ſame moment. My Lady Owen bottled up the reproaches ſhe intended for his Lordſhip, to uſe on a more private occaſion. This procraſtination did not proceed from diffidence, for Lady Owen had always a happy freedom of expreſſion, but never ſhone ſo much in that way as when in full dreſs. The reſtraint rather proceeded from Fitzhenry's diſinclination to give her eloquence an attentive hearing; for having made his bows to her gaudy Ladyſhip, he paſſed on to her daughter, whither ſhe eagerly followed him; her round

broad face ſhining with delight, and looking about on thoſe who were not ſo much concerned in the ſcene as herſelf, as much as to ſay—don't you ſee who will be Lady Fitzhenry?—He had hardly told the languiſhing Clarinda that ſhe looked like a divinity, when the fiddles ſtruck up, and every man began to ſelect his partner. Lady Owen had waited with the greateſt impatience to ſee her daughter led out by Fitzhenry; and, he making nothing like a motion to diſtinguiſh her in the manner ſhe expected, ſhe patted him on his ſhoulder with her fan, and aſked what he was dreaming about, that he let Miſs Owen wait ſo long before he drew on his gloves?—I hope, madam, ſaid he,

Miſs Owen will have a much better partner, but I am engaged to dance with Lady Betty Weſtbrook.—Now, that I know is no ſuch thing, ſhe replied, with a raiſed colour, for my dear Ducheſs of Radſtock called on me this very morning, and my Lady Ducheſs herſelf told me nothing about your being to dance with Lady Betty—I deſire, madam, cried Miſs Owen, you would not mortify me ſo much as to beg a partner.—Beg a partner! retorted my Lady Owen, why who would have thought of that, Miſs Owen? I ſhould be very glad for to know:—but you and my Lord are ſuch old friends, that I don't ſee no need for ſuch ceremony on either ſide.

Lord Fitzhenry begged to aſſure both the ladies that they had quite miſtaken his meaning—he was not poſitively engaged to Lady Betty Weſtbrook; but by the laws of *etiquette*, he ſhould be obliged to ſolicit the honour of her hand: could he have made the ſame demand on Miſs Owen, it would have been a decided matter of choice.—This civil declaration reſtored them to good humour, and led them farther than ever into the fools' paradiſe they had before ſo blindly entered; but what was the triumph of her Grace of Radſtock when ſhe ſaw her ſon and her daughter both provided for ſo perfectly to her wiſhes, and ſo much beyond her expectations! for at the ſame inſtant

Lady

Lady Betty was led to the top of the ſet by Lord Fitzhenry, Lord William was performing the ſame uſher-like office by the glittering heireſs of of Sir Ogle Owen's immenſity of riches. All the ill humour her Grace had brought with her into the aſſembly, evaporated like uncorked ether, and ſhe whiſpered Lady Owen how happy it made her to ſee her Ladyſhip had taken her friendly hint of not permitting them to be ſo ridiculouſly particular as to be always dancing together; this whiſper from my Lady Ducheſs was returned by my Lady Owen with another whiſper as low, in which ſhe communicated the very great difficulty with which ſhe had perſuaded my Lord and Miſs Owen to do as

my

my Lady Ducheſs deſired, or even to ſeparate them for two dances: for her part, ſhe added, it was no wonder that they were ſo fond; it was juſt the ſame with her and Sir Ogle, when they were paying their addreſſes to one another:—in the mean-time never was lover ſo indefatigable as Lord William, or a partner more abſent than Lord Fitzhenry: his body was dancing with Lady Betty, but his ſoul was wandering in ſearch of Miſs Melmoth; however, on the whole, the evening paſſed off very pleaſantly to the greater part of the company: Lord William did not give up his heireſs: the Ducheſs requeſted the ſame indulgence for her daughter, of Lord

Fitzhenry,

Fitzhenry, as Lady Betty, ſhe ſaid, was ſo timid, that to change one partner whom ſhe did know for another whom ſhe was not perhaps ſo well acquainted with, always ſadly diſtreſſed the ſhy creature ſo, that ſhe generally requeſted the firſt partner who engaged her daughter, not to deſert, and was ſure Lord Fitzhenry would excuſe her, that ſhe uſed the ſame freedom with him.—This was not exactly true, but it perfectly ſatisfied his Lordſhip, who, in the preſent ſituation of his thoughts, and the entanglements of his heart, would as ſoon have danced with Lady Betty as her grandmother, or with the grandmother as with Lady Betty herſelf: theſe two inſe-

parable

parable arrangements inſpired the Ducheſs of Radſtock with an overflowing of wit and pleaſantry that communicated its vivacity to five other Ducheſſes who ſent it round to ten Counteſſes, who conveyed it to ſixteen Viſcounteſſes, who ſent it into the hearts of twenty five Baroneſſes, who ſpread it through the whole circle. The young ladies were charming, the young men charmed, and many were the foundations laid at this enchanting ball, on which were afterwards erected many marriages; ſome on rocks that ſtood firm againſt the gales of pleaſure and the ſtorms of faſhion; others on ſand that tottered at the breeze of temptation, and fell

to

to the ground in the whirlwind of diſſipation.

The ſeparation of Fitzhenry from his family was followed by many tears, which ſilently ſtrayed down the cheeks of Lady Uxington and Elizabeth; but flowed with more abundant velocity from the ſparkling eyes of Jemima:—and as the two friends purſued their way to Dover, it was alſo obſerved by Fitzhenry, that his companion, though always of a ſerious turn, was now more than commonly penſive. On being taxed with a ſadneſs which he did not deny, our little Jemima had the credit of inſpiring it placed to her account by the ingenuous Courtenay, who

who declared that all his views of future felicity depended on finding her diſengaged on their return from the Continent.—So early a proof of confidence did not loſe its effect. Fitzhenry promiſed, if he continued of the ſame opinion till a few more years had paſſed over the head of her little giddy Ladyſhip, he ſhould find in him a ſtaunch advocate; and before they touched the French coaſt, they had not a ſecret thought that was not revealed to each other, by which means Lady Jemima and Miſs Melmoth might be almoſt ſaid to become the companions of their travels; at leaſt the never-ceaſing ſubjects of all their converſations—which was attended with this agreeable conſequence,

ſequence, that the delightful theme made rough roads ſmooth—weak horſes ſtrong—bad accommodations good—and the light of the moon equal to the light of the ſun.

The appointments of both Fitzhenry and of Courtenay were magnificent, and their retinues ſplendid. Paris was not what it is at the preſent day: it then afforded a thouſand inchanting ſpectacles for a young man who had never been out of his own country, and always preſented ſomething new to ſatisfy the inquiries of thoſe who returned to it again in purſuit of ſomething more than mere amuſement. This was exactly the deſcription of my two travellers;

vellers; and though Mr. Courtenay, for his particular reſearches, infinitely preferred Rome to Paris, he was well enough contented, at the inſtigations of Fitzhenry, to while away there two or three months before they proceeded further.—Courtenay, who knew how to ſet about doing every thing in the beſt poſſible way, hired a handſome hotel with all its appendages, and introduced Lord Fitzhenry into the moſt diſtinguiſhed families, where he would not have failed of a gracious reception, if he had poſſeſſed no other recommendations than the ſingle one of being Mr. Courtenay's friend: but that was by no means the caſe; his rank enſured him reſpect, and his merit laid claim

to

to much more than approbation: all the men vied with each other which of them ſhould give him the higheſt proofs of their friendſhip, and the ladies of their ſenſibility. To the politeneſs of one ſex his heart was open, to the advances of the other it was ſhut; Miſs Melmoth was portreſs, and would let no woman enter there but herſelf.

Fitzhenry had written to Lord Wardour before he left London, and after he got to Paris, but no anſwer came to either of his letters: he grew firſt melancholy, next ſuſpicious, and afterwards outrageous:—he ſwore Lord Wardour muſt have deceived him; he forſwore love, and he forſwore

ſwore friendſhip; Courtenay tried to reaſon him into a better humour, and at laſt ſucceeded ſo far as to make him wear a maſk of gaiety when his ſoul was writhing under all the torturing agonies of jealous ſuſpenſe: he ſoon grew tired of playing the hypocrite, he had never tried it before, and it did not ſuit the features of his impetuous mind.—They had only a fortnight longer to remain at Paris, and he heartily wiſhed that fortnight could have been blotted from the calendar of time.

In the midſt of his thouſand perplexities he did not forget to make every poſſible inquiry reſpecting the preſent reſidence of his unfortunate aunt,

aunt, Lady Hillford. When he left England, his family had received no very late accounts from her. Allowed to write but once in ſix months, half that time was ſtill unexpired; and in her laſt letter, dated from Lauſanne, ſhe had no idea to what part of the Continent or to what country they ſhould next proceed, Lord Hillford being always changing and always undecided in his choice of ſituations till the laſt moment. Lord Fitzhenry was charged with private letters from Lord Uxington, to this fondly beloved, this ever regretted ſiſter, with others of introduction, to be publicly delivered both to Lord and Lady Hillford. He had reaſon to ſuppoſe the ſight of her accompliſhed

pliſhed nephew would afford her ſome ſatisfaction: to that idea the Earl, who looked upon himſelf as the primary cauſe of all her misfortunes, ſacrificed the rational reſentment with which the very name of her tyrant huſband ever inſpired him. Fitzhenry could get no other information of them at Paris, only that they had paſſed ſome months there ſeveral years before, and ſince that time it was ſuppoſed reſided chiefly in Italy, which intelligence was obtained from a banker who had formerly done buſineſs for Lord Hillford; but never ſince he withdrew himſelf out of France had heard from his Lordſhip, or any thing certain about him.

It is not my intention to follow our travellers ſtep by ſtep through the foreign track they purſued, but, at the end of twelve months from the time they quitted London, to ſet them down in the city of Naples, there to achieve what adventures may happen to fall in their way.—In the mean time, and before I return again to offer my ſervices as their hiſtorian, it ſhall be my buſineſs to account for the otherwiſe unaccountable ſilence of Lord Wardour, which had ſo entirely overturned the philoſophy of poor Fitzhenry, as to make him almoſt incapable of pleaſure or improvement. In the progreſs of their tour, Courtenay left nothing unſaid or undone that might awaken him out

out of his lethargic indifference, and enliven his ſpirits: ſometimes he ſucceeded, but he had always reaſon to wiſh his efforts had been leſs ſucceſsful. The ſenſibility of Fitzhenry's ſoul was fervent and unmanageable: that melancholy which ſeemed to be the bane of his enjoyments was the ſafeſt ſituation in which he could be placed; to rouſe him from his inactivity could only be done by rouſing his paſſions alſo, and on the ſubject of Wardour they amounted to frenzy—on that of Miſs Melmoth, to deſpair.

At the time Fitzhenry made his firſt unexpected viſit at Northangle, Mrs. Melmoth had reaſons for withdrawing herſelf and niece, which, it

may be remembered, ſhe did in great haſte as ſoon as the ſervant who preceded him had announced his Lordſhip's approach, but not with ſo much adroitneſs as to prevent the young people from meeting at the ſide of the carriage: ſhe had afterwards reaſons for not refuſing to meet Fitzhenry as long as he continued in the neighbourhood, and even teſtified no reluctance to receive his viſits at her own houſe. Whatever it was that cauſed this ſudden change in her ſentiments it is not neceſſary to declare: it certainly proceeded from no deſire that her niece ſhould make him her conqueſt: on the contrary, when ſhe had cauſe to miſtruſt Miſs Melmoth's heart had received a too favourable

impreſſion from this dangerous gueſt of the Wardour family, to deſcribe the internal emotions of her mind would be a hard taſk; and ſo much the more difficult, as ſhe entirely diſguiſed them from the obſervation of Miſs Melmoth herſelf, under an impenetrable maſk of external placidity. With Lord and Lady Wardour ſhe was leſs on the reſerve: they had ſeen nothing of this unfortunate attachment as long as Lord Fitzhenry remained with them, but confeſſed that, ſince his departure, Miſs Melmoth's abſence on many occaſions, the pleaſure with which ſhe ſpoke of him, and the changes in her delicate countenance whenever his name happened to be mentioned by any body

but herſelf, had betrayed to them, as well as to Mrs. Melmoth, that ſhe did not think of him with indifference — a diſcovery by no means pleaſing to either of the two; yet they conſidered it as a tranſient approbation, which, having failed to inſpire ſentiments congenial in the object who called it out, muſt of itſelf die away and be forgotten. Lord Wardour ſaid, he would command his ſon to return immediately and complete his union with Miſs Melmoth, though he had entertained no doubts ſo diſadvantageous to the honour of Lord Fitzhenry, as that he would ever interfere with the views of his family, even if he had regarded Miſs Melmoth with more partiality than he had

had given them room to ſuppoſe; his attentions to her being merely thoſe of politeneſs, ſuch as ſhe might have demanded from him, and received with dignity to her own fame, had ſhe been already the wife of his ſon. Lady Wardour was of the ſame opinion with her huſband—they both very much approved of Mrs. Melmoth's ſilence to her niece on the ſubject; and before the council broke up they had nearly perſuaded themſelves, that there was as little foundation for their fears on her account, as they were certain there were none that ſuſpicion herſelf could harbour on the ſcore of Lord Fitzhenry. But ſtill it was thought neceſſary that the letter of recall ſhould be ſent off to

Mr. Wardour; his father retired to get it ready, but in the act of doing ſo was ſeized, before it was half finiſhed, with the diſorder which ſummoned him from all the buſy ſcenes of this life, and in a few hours conducted him (I hope) to a better.

Inſtead of receiving the commands of his father to return home, it was now the fate of Wardour to be informed by Mrs. Melmoth, that his father was no more. She requeſted he would give his mother the conſolation of ſeeing him, and he flew to conſole her—but for many weeks ſorrow uſurped the countenances of all who approached the miſerable chamber of mourning, and no other language

guage but that of ſorrow was ſpoken in the family. The concern of Mrs. Melmoth was very much heightened by the diſtance to which this event muſt infallibly have put back the completion of her niece's eſtabliſhment; and that of Wardour was in no ſmall degree augmented by the conſideration of his having two declarations to make to his mother, when ſhe ſhould be able to bear them, which muſt be told, and which he had too much reaſon to ſuppoſe would be attended with greater miſery to her than the blow ſhe had ſo lately ſuſtained—He would never be the huſband of Miſs Melmoth—he was a Proteſtant—Would not theſe tidings, whenever communicated, be

more than ſhe could ſupport?—would ſhe not ſink under them?—He adored his mother, and ſhuddered as he aſked theſe queſtions of filial ſenſibility. His recantation of errors was not the work of paſſion, but of judgment—his converſion had taken place before he ever ſaw Lady Elizabeth Fitzhenry—it was her aunt Lady Hillford to whom he was indebted for ſowing the early ſeeds of information in his mind, and his own indefatigable diligence cleared Truth from all the rubbiſh of ſuperſtition through which he had been accuſtomed to ſee her. This labour finiſhed, the ſeeds ſprang, and the fruits of them ripened.—Lady Hillford accompliſhed this great work, not by deſign but acci-

dent, and even without ſuſpecting how much her arguments aſſiſted his naturally fine underſtanding. Whilſt he was receiving his education at Nice, he frequently made a part of her family, ſhe being exceedingly attached to him for his mother's ſake. He was often in her apartment when ſhe entered into controverſial ſubjects with the prieſts, to whom ſhe was forced by the harſh commands of her huſband to give audience one day in a week, from the idea that at laſt ſhe would ſubmit to theirs her hitherto ſtubborn opinions; but every argument ſhe brought forward to ſupport them was advanced with ſo much modeſt wiſdom and immutable firmneſs, that though Henry Wardour never ſeemed

to lend his attention to theſe conferences, but buſied himſelf as if ſtudying his ſchool exerciſe; yet young as he was, he did not loſe a word that fell from the lips of Lady Hillford—her captivating defence of truth ſtole upon his ſenſes, he adopted her ſentiments, they were for ever impreſſed on his memory, flouriſhed with his growth, and ripened with his reaſon. He only waited for the opportunity which now preſented itſelf to declare his new faith, but ſtill protracted the declaration, fearful of its conſequences, till his mother's health and ſpirits ſhould be better eſtabliſhed.

Mrs. Melmoth was exceedingly chagrined on his arrival at North-

angle,

angle, after the death of his father, not to obſerve in him ſymptoms of paſſion for her niece, ſuch as cannot be concealed by any local ſituation, however ſorrowful: ſhe was far from placing this apathy to the account of grief; ſhe rather conſidered it as the total overthrow of her deep-rooted expectations, which filled her with ſilent ſpleen, and ſhe pined away with vexation. A few weeks revived, though they did not eſtabliſh, her hopes. Lord Wardour apparently ſought for opportunities of being alone and in private with Miſs Melmoth; whilſt the affectionate confidence, though it had no reſemblance to love, which ſeemed to ſubſiſt between them, was a change ſo much

for

for the better, that her fears abated and her good humour returned—ſhe thought it was impoſſible they could be ſo much together without entertaining each other on the tendereſt of all ſubjects. She reſolved to gratify her curioſity; and the day ſhe choſe for her ſecret enquiries happened to be that on which Wardour diſcloſed not his own, but the love of his friend for Miſs Melmoth; beſides which, ſhe had alſo the mortification to hear her niece confeſs a very favourable opinion for Lord Fitzhenry. Lady Wardour was not in a ſituation to be immediately conſulted on the important diſcovery: ſhe therefore acted from the impulſe of the moment, and ſtruck as ſhe imagined

imagined a final blow to the very root of the evil, by diſpatching the anonymous intelligence to Lord Uxington, in a letter that has already made its appearance, and produced conſequences very different from what were expected.

Mrs. Melmoth did not reſt here—ſhe had ſeveral other reſources by which ſhe meant to ſtrengthen her ſecurity againſt her niece's entering into an alliance, which, however great and flattering it might ſeem to unprejudiced perſons, appeared to her the worſt of all poſſible misfortunes, and ſhe would have conſigned Miſs Melmoth to the arms of death, rather than to thoſe of Lord Fitzhenry.

Her

Her private reaſons for this preference I am not to develop, but ſhall follow her through the track ſhe took to prevent their union.

Mrs. Melmoth had a friend equally intereſted with herſelf in the diſpoſal of her niece, and who, ſhe had cauſe to know, would be equally averſe to any connection for her with the ſon of Lord Uxington; this friend was at a diſtance—ſhe wrote, and waited impatiently till an anſwer could be received. The day after ſhe had contrived to make herſelf miſtreſs of their ſecret, Miſs Melmoth by chance, ſeeing that Lord Wardour came in later than uſual to dinner, aſked if he had been walking. He ſaid, No—

the

the weather was too cold; he therefore made choice of a ſituation by the fire-ſide, where he had juſt finiſhed and ſent off a long letter to his friend, Lord Fitzhenry. This put it into the head of Mrs. Melmoth, that, except a method could be found out to ſtop ſo dangerous a correſpondence, every other effort that might be deviſed to ſeparate her niece from the purſuit of his Lordſhip would be utterly ineffectual: ſhe immediately thought of an expedient, but durſt not carry it into execution without conſulting Lady Wardour, or indeed without her approbation and aſſiſtance. She deferred making the communication to her Ladyſhip no longer than

than till the perſon, to whom ſhe had applied for directions, forwarded them to her; ſhe then made her information, which very much afflicted the diſconſolate widow—that the will of her huſband, which her ſon had never in his father's life-time preſumed to diſpute, ſhould, when he no longer lived to enforce it, be ſet at defiance. She regarded herſelf as the guardian of that will; and though moderate and rational on all other occaſions, in this one act, which ſhe conſidered as a ſacred duty ſhe owed to the memory of her deceaſed Lord, neither moderation nor reaſon was conſulted, and ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be conducted by the counſel of Mrs. Mel-

moth

moth into ſcenes of ſtratagem with which her upright mind had been hitherto unacquainted.

Lady Wardour had placed near the perſon of her ſon, from the time he was ſix years old, a young man whoſe mother had been her nurſe: he was ever after the truſty, well-beloved ſervant of his maſter; and the many kindneſſes beſtowed by her on this man and his family, left her no room to doubt his gratitude in punctually obeying her commands, though they ſhould not correſpond with thoſe of his Lord.—The trial was made, and ſucceeded: he was not ordered to withhold any letters that came to his Lord; he was only

reſtricted

reſtricted never to forward ſuch as were written by him, and addreſſed to Lord Fitzhenry, but to deſtroy them as ſoon as they came into his hands; and always to be on the watch, that her ſon did not conſign them to the care of any other perſon. All this he faithfully promiſed, and as faithfully executed; which will ſufficiently account for Fitzhenry's ſeries of diſappointments, that at laſt wore out his patience, and forced him to renounce both the friendſhip and correſpondence of Lord Wardour, who, by a further contrivance of the ladies, never receiving but one letter from the offended lover of Miſs Melmoth, and finding all that he ſaid to bring forward an explanation

of

of this unaccountable ſilence remained unanſwered, his ſituation was at leaſt not more enviable than that of Fitzhenry himſelf.

Immediately on receipt of the expected letter from the confidential friend of Mrs. Melmoth, after a long conſultation between her and Lady Wardour, the latter ſignified to her ſon, that by the advice of her phyſician ſhe propoſed ſpending a few months in the ſouth of France, for the re-eſtabliſhment of her health: he moſt readily offered to attend her wherever ſhe went; and Mrs. Melmoth ſaid jeſtingly, Suppoſe we all go together? I think it would be mighty comfortable: how ſhould you like it, my dear?

dear? (turning to her niece)—Exceedingly, replied Miſs Melmoth—Well, then, we will actually go, added her aunt; and whilſt her Ladyſhip is ſipping at the fountains of health, perhaps I ſhall give you a peep into the garden of the world, dear Italy, which it is a long time ſince I viſited:—I ſuppoſe it will be the laſt of my excurſions, for at ſixty-five I muſt not expect any more ſuch rambles.—Thus did ſhe make a deep concerted ſcheme appear to be nothing more than the effect of chance; decorating grave deſign in the gay garb of frolic. Fitzhenry was immediately informed of the newly adopted plan; but, alas! this letter, which, had it been permitted to have reached

reached his hand, would have made him the happieſt of mankind, was the very firſt on which the ſervant of his friend, the creature of Lady Wardour, practiſed infidelity to his Lord, in being too faithful to the commands of her Ladyſhip!

Courtenay, on their arrival at Naples, adviſed Fitzhenry to beſtow one letter more on Lord Wardour: but his counſel was rejected; and the once agreeable, lively companion of his travels, by the ſuppoſed perfidy of his treacherous friend, and the ceſſation of hope that he ſhould ever again behold the fair face of Miſs Melmoth, was converted into an unſocial being, wrapt in the gloom of melancholy; turbulent, refractory, unmanageable, diſap-

diſappointed, diſſatisfied and diſtreſſed. They took poſſeſſion of a handſome houſe, which one of Mr. Courtenay's friends had previouſly provided and prepared for their reception. The Count de Ferranda, to whom the application had been made, was a man of ſenſe, faſhion, and information:—he waited to ſalute them on their arrival, and was afterwards prevailed on to paſs the evening in their ſociety. This reinforcement to their party was a real acquiſition to Courtenay; his ſtrongeſt efforts could not draw Fitzhenry from the abyſs of deſpondence: where he plunged, there he ſtuck—till, by the united endeavours of this well-bred Italian, his diſconſolate Lordſhip was brought a little nearer

nearer towards the ſurface of rationality: what ſerved to accelerate this mighty taſk, was the intelligence the Count gave him, that Lord and Lady Hillford were both at that time reſident in Naples.

To be ſo near Lady Hillford, whoſe character he revered, though her perſon was unknown to him, communicated the firſt ray of pleaſure which had viſited his benighted imagination for many months. He was impatient to throw himſelf at the feet of his reſpectable aunt; but did not wiſh their firſt interview ſhould take place in the preſence of her leſs reſpectable Lord. He ſignified to the Count his deſire of being admitted

to the preſence of his aunt before he was preſented to Lord Hillford, and was adviſed by him to make his viſit late in the morning, when it was moſt probable his Lordſhip would be from home. He ſaid he was no ſtranger in the family, and offered to conduct him to Lady Hillford—a civility declined by Fitzhenry, who had many things to ſay to his aunt from his father, which were not calculated for any ear but her own.

The converſation of the evening turned a great deal on the moſt intereſting of women; for no ſooner had Fitzhenry been informed the Count was numbered amongſt the friends of Lady Hillford, than he aſked

aſked ſo many queſtions concerning her health, her looks, her ſpirits, and her amuſements, as drew on a long chain of anſwers, to the laſt link of which they were hardly arrived, when ſupper was ſet upon the table; and the ſervants being ſoon diſmiſſed, Count Ferranda contrived to renew the ſubject, which ſeemed of all others to engage the attention of Lord Fitz-henry.

I have had the honour of telling you, my Lord, ſaid the communicative Count, all that I know of the moſt charming wife our country has to boaſt;—pardon me that I call Lady Hillford my countrywoman! ſhe has ſo long been the ornament of our

Italy, that we have the addreſs to forget your England has claims to her birth, and the vanity to conſider her our own by adoption. I offered to conduct you to her preſence; it was a ſelfiſh propoſal.

Ah! cried Fitzhenry, interrupting him, with a gay air, you almoſt make me jealous for the honour of my family:—if my aunt were not paſt the meridian of her youth, the warmth of your praiſes, and your hint of ſelfiſh motives, might have raiſed my ſuſpicions.

Then you would have injured the Count, ſaid Courtenay: had your aunt been as young and beautiful as Lady

Lady Jemima, and the wife of another, he would have held her ſacred. I will bring you a proof in how much—He would have proceeded, but the Count prevented him:—We muſt have no pretended proof, ſaid he, of a fact you may not find it quite ſo eaſy to eſtabliſh; but it will be leſs difficult to convince my Lord that I entertain no ſentiment for Lady Hillford, except of the moſt reſpectful homage.—Lady Hillford has a friend—ah, that friend!—Since you will not permit me the honour to be your eſcort when you viſit Lady Hillford, I ſhall certainly importune all the ſaints in my calendar, not to throw that angel friend in the way of your Lordſhip; but

if they ſhould be deaf to my petition, behold her if you can with indifference—When you ſee her, pity me—and when you know her, plead for me.

The Count's carriage was announced; Fitzhenry aſſured him all his injunctions ſhould be obeyed, and he took his leave, leaving our travellers to ſeek that repoſe, for which forty hours on the road without reſt had ſufficiently prepared them.

The next morning Mr. Courtenay went out to pay his compliments to a number of his former acquaintance, whilſt Fitzhenry proceeded to the houſe

houſe of Lord Hillford. He firſt enquired for his Lordſhip—He was gone out—Lady Hillford was at home. He deſired to be ſhewn to her apartment, and followed the ſervant; who having aſked by what name he would chooſe to be announced, before he made his reply, the door opened on the inſide, and Count Ferranda's Divinity (for it could be no other) would have paſſed by him, if he had not ſeized her hands, and with gentle violence reconducted her to the room ſhe had quitted, where, falling at her feet, and unable to diſguiſe the diſtracted ſtate of his heart, he cried out: Tell me, in mercy tell me! are you the wife of Lord Wardour?—The door opened a ſecond

time—I beg your pardon, ſaid a gentleman, who entered precipitately, I came hither to ſeek my wife. I beg your pardon, Miſs Melmoth; I did not expect to have found you ſo particularly engaged.—Fitzhenry ſuſpected this intruder might be Lord Hillford, as in fact it was, and haſtily roſe from his ſupplicating poſture.—Miſs Melmoth bluſhed ſcarlet deep, and heſitatingly pronounced the name of Lord Fitzhenry.—He ſaw the diſturbance of her mind, and gracefully advancing: Lord Hillford, I preſume, ſaid he, and the huſband of my father's ſiſter?—The ſame, and perfectly at your Lordſhip's ſervice, replied this obliging uncle, whoſe ſudden change of countenance from auſterity

auſterity to complacency might have appeared wonderful to obſervers leſs immerged in their own affairs than the lovers who ſtood before him.—I am indeed moſt heartily at your ſervice, continued he, embracing his nephew according to the cuſtom of the country, and ſaluting him on both ſides of his face: he then added, Will you be ſo good, Miſs Melmoth, as to announce our gueſt to Lady Hillford?—Such ſurpriſes as theſe are very often leſs pleaſant in their conſequence than delightful in their approaches.—Why do you tremble, Madam? It gives me infinite pleaſure to diſcover, in the firſt moment of our acquaintance, that my nephew is a man of taſte: what ſtronger

proof could he have given me of it than to find him at your feet?— Whilſt ſpeaking he detained her hand in his, ſo that ſhe could not eſcape from his raillery: but the moment ſhe could withdraw it from his graſp, away ſhe hurried, covered with the deepeſt confuſion; whilſt Fitzhenry, very little more at eaſe than herſelf, preſented to the cruel tormentor Lord Uxington's letter, which the perſon to whom it was addreſſed put into his pocket with its ſeal unbroken; politely ſaying, he would examine the contents at a leſs valuable moment: For who, added he with the moſt gracious air in the world, and tones fully as inſinuating, who would be gratified with

with profeſſions of friendſhip, after ſuch a teſtimony of its reality as my good brother has conferred in ſending you to me?

Fitzhenry, at any leſs intereſting period of his life, would have been puzzled to find the leaſt analogy between the Lord Hillford who had made his father and his aunt ſo miſerable, and the Lord Hillford who loaded him with ſo many tokens of kindneſs; but now it paſſed almoſt without a comment: his thoughts were wandering in quite another direction, and he was now only puzzled with ſurmiſes of how long it would be before he might expect the return of Miſs Melmoth;

what was become of Wardour; and how ſhe happened to be eſtabliſhed in the family of Lord Hillford, where from many circumſtances ſhe appeared to be quite at home.—So much were his ideas entangled in the intricate mazes of uncertainty, that though the queſtions propoſed by his courteous relation, ſuch as, When he left England—had he a good journey—did he like Paris—when did he get to Naples—with others of the ſame eaſy nature, it muſt be allowed, required no extraordinary talents of recollection to anſwer, at leaſt with as much wiſdom as they were aſked; yet he never found himſelf at a greater loſs for the powers of expreſſion, till Lord

Lord Hillford awakened his attention, by obſerving the happy acquiſition his wife had the good fortune to make within her family circle by the addition of Miſs Melmoth's ſociety, adding: Our acquaintance with the charming girl was merely accidental; but your claims on her friendſhip, I preſume, my Lord, have been long eſtabliſhed?

Fitzhenry replied, firſt a little confuſed, and afterwards a great deal more agitated, that he had once the happineſs of ſeeing Miſs Melmoth before he quitted his country; but, as to his claims on her friendſhip, he feared there was another by whom they were ſuperſeded.

Lord

Lord Hillford ſmiled, his ſmile was gracious and encouraging: Pardon me, ſaid he, if, after witneſſing the reception ſhe has given you, I declare myſelf incredulous on the ſubject of your having a favoured rival, though I know there is another fervent adorer in the caſe. Wardour muſt be unſucceſsful, when a Fitzhenry is his competitor. But enough! I hear my wife coming out of her room, we will talk of this matter ſome other time.

Lady Hillford entered, her Lord preſented Fitzhenry to her. My deareſt Iſabella, ſaid he, receive your accompliſhed nephew.—He was already on his knees before her: ſhe examined

examined him with a look—Oh, that look was not to be deſcribed!—Unable to utter, ſhe knelt down, threw her arms round him, and fainted. —It is impoſſible to ſay what were the emotions of Fitzhenry: even Miſs Melmoth, by whoſe arm on her entrance ſhe was ſupported, had no part in them; both ſhe and Lord Hillford tenderly aſſiſted him in lifting her to a ſofa. The beautiful eyes of the former were ſuffuſed in the tears of ſympathy; whilſt thoſe of the latter expreſſed much more than I have time to decipher.—Every means was adminiſtered to Lady Hillford's recovery, and of courſe ſucceeded; one of her hands was retained by her nephew, the other by Miſs

Miſs Melmoth, a mechanical motion in uniting her own brought theirs together. Fitzhenry's ſoul thrilled with tranſport, and the face of Miſs Melmoth was illuminated with bluſhes. The action was ſudden as involuntary. Fitzhenry did not augment her confuſion by looking towards her; but, fixing his eyes with tender devotion on his aunt, made ſuch fervent enquiries concerning her health, as if his thoughts had been occupied on no other ſubject: indeed they were much divided between the meridian and the ſetting ſun; both, in all their ſplendour, affecting his ſenſes at the ſame moment. He had never, but in the two Ladies before him, ſeen beauty in its noon

ſo

ſo lovely, or in its decline ſo faſcinating.

The powers of obſervation preceded thoſe of articulation—Lady Hillford gazed on her nephew as I have ſeen mothers look on the infant offſpring to whom they have juſt given life, when they are firſt preſented to their arms. There was an awfulneſs in her ſilence, which to have interrupted by ſound, would have been to ſin againſt ſenſibility; even by Lord Hillford it was held ſacred till ſhe broke it herſelf, and exclaimed—Gracious God! how like Fitzhenry when I laſt ſaw him—how very like my dear brother!

I am

I am not going to repreſent a full-length portrait of this interview—I have rather choſen to delineate a feature of it here and there—juſt as they happened to ſtrike my own fancy, ſo I ſcatter them on my canvaſs.—Miſs Melmoth had vaniſhed out of the room as ſoon as ſhe ſaw Lady Hillford no longer ſtood in need of her aſſiſtance; and my Lord himſelf did not ſtay many minutes behind her, having firſt apologiſed to Fitzhenry for a ſhort abſence, and politely inſiſting on his being their gueſt at dinner—He had buſineſs, he ſaid, to tranſact of a particular nature, which called him out at an early hour: ſome neceſſary papers being forgot, he

he returned home to fetch them, and pronounced the neglect to be fortunate which had procured him the honour of embracing his Lordſhip much before the time he ſhould otherwiſe have done. Fitzhenry, in making proper returns for all this inundation of civility, did not forget to plead, in defence of waving the dinner invitation (which he fervently wiſhed to accept), that Mr. Courtenay would expect him; by which means he got his friend included, to whom he diſpatched a ſhort billet, in which the name of Miſs Melmoth was not once mentioned.

Lady Hillford, on finding herſelf alone with Fitzhenry, took no advantage

tage of her Lord's abſence, to tincture the mind of her nephew with unfavourable impreſſions of his ſincerity; on the contrary, ſhe ſpoke of her huſband as if ſhe wiſhed to inſpire him with reſpect for his character. The meſſages and letters which in this moment of privacy he delivered from his father, convinced her that he was well acquainted with her unfortunate fate—ſhe was ſorry he knew ſo much againſt the enemy of his houſe:—Truths which ſhe could not deny ſhe ſtrove to ſoften, and what ſhe could not herſelf but recollect with anguiſh of heart, by the cheerfulneſs and vigour of her exertions ſhe endeavoured to make him forget. Perhaps, ſaid ſhe, I have not always thought

thought my ſituation ſo enviably happy as I think it at preſent—No, deareſt Fitzhenry—ſince my Lord's inclinations and the duty of a wife tore me from the arms of my beloved brother, of my other affectionate friends I have deſerved a great deal of cenſure, for not ſupporting my lot with more contentment than the weakneſs of my erring nature would permit.

Oh—do not—do not accuſe yourſelf, he cried, affectionately kiſſing her hands—for if it is in human nature to be perfect, you are all—all perfect.

Ah, replied ſhe, ſmiling, there is in you, I already perceive, that lively ardency which I uſed to be ſo much afraid

afraid to encounter with in your father; I ſhall have no more courage to combat with you than with him—So let it paſs that I am—a perfect old woman; ſtill I will not be vain of the diſtinction, as I every day ſee myſelf infinitely ſurpaſſed by a young one.—Fitzhenry coloured—Think on Lord Hillford's goodneſs to me for having given me ſuch a companion as Miſs Melmoth—You muſt love him for this indulgence to my wiſhes, you muſt help me to acquit the obligation I owe him on this particular ſcore, and you will do it with pleaſure when you are better acquainted with my young favourite.—Fitzhenry ſmiled—Neither his change of colour, nor his ſmile, was obſerved by her who had excited

excited them, her looks were rather averted from than fixed on him; ſhe feared his penetrating glances might ſearch deeper than ſhe would have directed them, and at laſt find out the ſecret corner of her heart, in which ſhe had depoſited all the hidden treaſures of her grief. She ſpoke, as Fitzhenry choſe to conſtrue it, in the language of Hope; ſhe appeared, through the optics of his viſion, the very ſeraph of conſolation; he aſſured himſelf at leaſt of her compaſſion, and poured out the whole contents of his enamoured ſoul into her affectionate boſom.

Lady Hillford liſtened with attention, and heard him to an end with-

out interruption, except by ſuch ſhort ſentences as theſe, which ſhe could not always reſtrain—Grant it, good God!—can it be?—what happineſs!—will my brother conſent?—dear generous brother!—But no ſooner had he finiſhed his little narrative, than ſhe cried out in the ſanguine expreſſion of a flattering imagination—Yes, Fitzhenry, ſhe will be yours!—Miſs Melmoth will be yours!—Wardour is a good young man, but he muſt not contend with Fitzhenry.

Tell me, for God's ſake, my dear, my kind aunt, what do you know of Wardour's preſent pretenſions to Miſs Melmoth?—He once reſigned them

to me—unſolicited reſigned them—courted me to engage her heart—told me I had ſucceeded.—By Heaven, if he has deceived me——

Moderate your reſentment, ſaid ſhe, interrupting him. I have a better opinion of Lord Wardour, I knew and loved him when a boy: he is certainly poſſeſſed of principle; he would not intentionally deviate from the laws of honour: if he has deceived you, he muſt firſt have deceived himſelf: liſten to me with patience, and I will tell you what I have heard on the ſubject from my Lord, as well as from Lord Wardour's mother, who is one of the beſt of women. Fitzhenry ſignified his grateful acquieſ-

cence, after which Lady Hillford gave him the following information:

About eight months ago, ſhe ſaid, Lord Hillford had taken her on an excurſion of pleaſure to ———, the waters of which were held in ſo great eſteem, that the multitude of drinkers, who had got there before them from every quarter of Europe, had made it extremely difficult for them to procure any ſort of accommodation. Lady Wardour, who had tried their efficacy without finding the benefit ſhe expected to receive, was on the eve of quitting it, when ſhe heard by accident that they were arrived, and in diſtreſs for either houſe or lodgings to repoſe in until Lady Hillford ſhould

ſhould have recovered the fatigues of her journey, which had been a long one, upwards of two hundred miles. Lord Wardour immediately waited on them to offer the houſe his mother occupied, who meant to leave it on the following day, accompanied by an affectionate requeſt from her Ladyſhip, that ſhe might ſee them before her departure, to renew that acquaintance which in the former part of their lives had a too ſudden termination.—The offer was thankfully accepted, the requeſt joyfully complied with, and the whole of that day was paſſed in the ſociety of Lady Wardour and Miſs Melmoth. Lord Wardour ſpent part of it with them; but the greater part he was abſent,

tranſacting ſome affairs for his mother and Mrs. Melmoth before their departure, who were both unable to aſſiſt themſelves, the former being reduced both in mind and body, the latter ſo ill in a fit of the ague that ſhe did not once make her appearance. Both Lord and Lady Hillford were enchanted with the beautiful niece of the invalid lady, whom they had not ſeen; and when Lady Wardour teſtified her regret that Miſs Melmoth ſhould ſacrifice ſo much of her time in warm chambers, ſhut up with the ſick and the melancholy, which might at laſt prove prejudicial to her own health—when ſhe lamented that the place they were ordered to was much leſs agreeable than the ſituation

tion they were about to leave—Lord Hillford, having whiſpered his wife, and read in her enlightened features how much the propoſition would delight her, immediately propoſed to take the lovely girl under their protection, as long as Lady Wardour and Mrs. Melmoth found it for the advantage of their healths to remain on the Continent. Lady Hillford declared to Fitzhenry, that, whilſt this arrangement ſtood ſuſpended, ſhe felt as if the ſentence of her own life or death was in agitation: —ſuch a *penchant* had ſhe taken for the engaging charmer, and ſo anxiouſly did ſhe wiſh for ſo ſweet a companion. It was a favour, ſhe ſaid, that endeared Lord Hillford to her heart

more than all the other acts of kindneſs he had ever ſhewn her. Lady Wardour conſented to crown their wiſhes, if they were not oppoſed by Mrs. Melmoth, to whoſe apartment ſhe withdrew, and in a very ſhort time returned, not only with her approbation, but a thouſand grateful acknowledgments to the noble pair who had condeſcended to grant their protection to her niece. Miſs Melmoth herſelf appeared divided between the joy of following Lady Hillford, for whom ſhe felt a predilection ſtrong as her own, and grief at leaving behind her the only relation ſhe had ever known, together with Lady Wardour, whom ſhe conſidered equally her parent. —The latter had

had a long conference with Lord Hillford; and when they rejoined his wife, ſhe ſaid with a ſigh: My dear friend, you will forgive my abſence—would to God there was no difference in our moſt material opinions! then could I indeed ſpeak without fear of offending you on the ſubjects which for want of that analogy I can now only preſume to confide with his Lordſhip: he will tell you, madam, the views we have for our amiable ward; and my ſon will hereafter unite his thanks with ours, for the goodneſs you are inclined to ſhew her. Whilſt this converſation paſſed in the drawing-room, Miſs Melmoth was in her aunt's apartment, and ſoon after they were joined by Lord War-

dour, who teſtified both ſurpriſe and concern that they were ſo ſuddenly to loſe the charming companion of their further excurſions. That evening Miſs Melmoth returned with her new friend, Lord Hillford obſerving there would be more cruelty than kindneſs, in permitting her to paſs an anxious night of tears and regret with the party from whom the next day ſhe was to be ſeparated.

Fitzhenry interrupted his aunt at this part of her narrative, by aſking what ſymptoms of paſſion ſhe perceived in Lord Wardour on his taking final leave of Miſs Melmoth.—They ſeemed to part, replied ſhe, as tender affectionate friends generally do, who ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe it may be a long time before they are to meet again.—I thought ſo! cried Fitzhenry, riſing from his chair, and walking two or three turns haſtily acroſs the room—I thought ſo —like tender and affectionate friends! Proceed, my dear aunt, you have ſaid nothing yet to exculpate Wardour —Wardour is a villain!

Say that again, dear as you are to me, replied Lady Hillford with a firm tone, and I am ſilenced on the ſubject of your ſuppoſed wrongs, not only now—but for ever. He had long known that ſteadineſs was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of her exalted mind; he knew that her word was ſacred; he therefore threw a

veil over his reſentment; and panting with impatience for a nearer view of his misfortune, he repreſſed the agony of his tortured ſoul, making every poſſible conceſſion for the warmth into which he had been betrayed; and ſo effectually calmed the apprehenſions of Lady Hillford, that ſhe no more heſitated to ſatisfy his eager demands, to the utmoſt extent of her knowledge; which ſhe confeſſed was chiefly derived from the communications of her Lord, by whom ſhe had been informed, that Miſs Melmoth's union with Lord Wardour was a decided point between the two families, from an early period of their infancy; that unhappily the affection which ſhould have been mutual, ſubſiſted

ſiſted but on one ſide—Lord Wardour adored her—ſhe could not endure him. When he diſcovered her averſion to be ſo ſtrongly rooted as to afford no probability that it could ever be eradicated, the generoſity of his ſentiments prompted him to the enthuſiaſtic ſacrifice of his deareſt hopes; on the ruins of which he meant to eſtabliſh her ſatisfaction. In purſuance of this plan, he made no complaints to his family of that freezing coldneſs by which his faireſt expectations were blaſted; he rather ſtrove to convince them that the delays, which for her ſake alone he ſtudied to throw in the way of their wiſhes, originated in his own prejudices againſt entering into thoſe early en-

gagements, which he pretended to ſay were a reſtraint on the pleaſures of youth.—He did more—he endeavoured to like another as well, if poſſible, as he had liked Miſs Melmoth; and fancied nothing was wanting to complete the conqueſt a young Engliſh lady of rank had begun to make upon his heart, but to ſee Miſs Melmoth removed from the poſſibility of being his, by becoming the wife of a more favoured lover.—Remember your promiſe, continued Lady Hillford, ſeeing Fitzhenry's blood mounting with velocity into his face, and his eyes flaſhing with more than the fire of expectation. If I fail to be the ſucceſsful advocate of Lord Wardour, blame my want

of powers; but glance not a ſuſpicion injurious to his honour. I promiſe you, he replied with vivacity, that I ſhall form no new opinions prejudicial to his Lordſhip's character, though I have ſome reaſon to believe the lady of rank to whom he tried to attach his wavering affections was my ſiſter, and your Ladyſhip's niece; and that I was the friend he intended to honour with the hand of Miſs Melmoth. Oh, madam! had he been ſincere! had he not made me the dupe only of his unſtable purpoſes, then, indeed, would he have been the friend of Fitzhenry!

And why will you not ſtill believe him

him your friend, my dear nephew? I muſt haſten to convince you that in truth he deſerves the appellation, or I ſhall keep you in no ſort of order—he ſtill neglects his own intereſt, to plead your cauſe with Miſs Melmoth!

Ah, madam! who ſhall aſſure me of that circumſtance?

Miſs Melmoth's own confeſſion ſhall ſome day or other convince you of the truth I have uttered.

A thouſand bleſſings on the lips that pronounce my fate of ſo different a complexion from what my imagination

gination had ſigured it! If Miſs Melmoth has told you this, ſhe cannot hate me.

She does not hate you: I am the confidante of her moſt ſecret thoughts: ſhe loves Wardour as her brother—ſhe does not ſtop exactly at the ſame bounds in her favour for Fitzhenry. Fitzhenry was now at her feet, ſilent through exceſs of joy.—She held out her hand; he carried it to his lips.—Your paſſions, ſaid ſhe, raiſing him, are, I find, alike unbounded, whether in the extreme of love, hatred, or jealouſy, and will make you their eternal ſport, unleſs you learn to keep them under ſome ſort of ſubjection:—theſe ardours, added

ſhe

ſhe with a ſigh that found a covered way to paſs by without being noticed, under the umbrage of a ſmile, which ſmile would have miſled attention much more diſengaged than Fitzhenry's—theſe ardours—theſe flights from reaſon, ſaid ſhe, I have ſome cauſe to ſuppoſe are hereditary, and that not one of my family is ever fated to eſcape them.

But how, my deareſt aunt, exclaimed Fitzhenry, can you tell me that I am not hated by your divine friend, yet expect that I ſhall keep my ſenſes?

Keep them together a few moments longer, ſaid ſhe, that you may be

be able to collect and arrange what I have yet remaining to tell you.—Pardon me, he cried, if I interrupt you to aſk, before I can liſten to any thing elſe, why, if Miſs Melmoth condeſcends to beſtow a thought on me, why did ſhe ſhew marks of tender affection when ſhe parted with Wardour?—and why, if Wardour neglects his own intereſt to plead my cauſe, why did he appear to be concerned at the ſeparation?—Why did they bid each other adieu, ſo much like tender, affectionate friends who ſuppoſe it may be a long time before they are to meet again?—You find I have treaſured every word of yours in my memory—you ſee alſo that I have improved by your ſtricture on violence

violence—Can man be more calm, more compoſed than I am? And yet I ſhould be very glad to have theſe queſtions anſwered; there is a nicety in ſplitting the delicate fibres by which love and friendſhip are to be diſunited, of which, without your aſſiſtance, I hold myſelf utterly incapable.

Ah, my poor Fitzhenry! replied Lady Hillford, I do not love you leſs, but pity you more than I can expreſs, for this warmth, this unmanageable warmth, which is much too ſtrong to admit of the diſguiſe you are trying to throw over it. However, your doubts ſhall be ſatisfied—I repeat to you, that there is no tie that binds

Miſs

Miſs Melmoth to Lord Wardour, but eſteem and gratitude; would you deſire that the woman you wiſh to make the companion of your life ſhould be blind to merit, inſenſible to kindneſs, a prude, and an ingrate?—What a monſter, cried Fitzhenry, do you hold up to my view!—God forbid Miſs Melmoth's mind ſhould be deformed by a ſingle feature in this deſcription!—And yet, replied his ſenſible monitreſs, ſhe would have reſembled the whole, if ſhe could have refuſed her friendſhip, nay more, her ſiſterly affection, to the rival of whom you entertain unfounded apprehenſions. Judge yourſelf whether he is entitled to her confidence, when I tell you that, by her own confeſſion,

I have

I have diſcovered her perfect ignorance of his paſſion for her, which Lord Hillford aſſures me has been nearly fatal to himſelf: he talks to her, not of his own love, but of yours, dear Fitzhenry, with a conſtancy that does honour to his ſincerity as a friend, and credit to his fortitude as a man. Here the *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the arrival of the Princeſs Maritinda, Count de Ferranda, Mr. Courtenay, two other Engliſh gentlemen, and ſeveral nobleſſe of both ſexes; all dinner gueſts, expected by Lady Hillford, but for whoſe reception ſhe was not ſufficiently prepared; hours having appeared but as moments in the ſociety of a nephew, ſo infinitely endeared to her by

by a thouſand heart-rending conſiderations. Having preſented him to the company, and permitted his preſentation of Mr. Courtenay, who, as the nephew of Dr. Burnet, was received with maternal marks of affection, ſhe retired to get rid of her *papillots*, well knowing what to expect, had Lord Hillford returned before ſhe had made her toilet.

Fitzhenry, whoſe burthen of cares was conſiderably lightened, though not entirely removed, did the honours of the houſe, in the abſence of his aunt, with ſo much eaſe, grace, and vivacity, that all the men were his admirers, and all the women his captives. Courtenay was aſtoniſhed to

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ſee him more lively than he had ever ſeen him, even before his laſt long ſeries of diſappointments; and the Count, who had the laſt evening declared himſelf the adorer of Lady Hillford's friend, could conceive this change in the gloomy Engliſhman to proceed only from the bright eyes which had done ſo much execution on himſelf.—Have you ſeen her? whiſpered he.—Yes, re-whiſpered Fitzhenry.—And how do you like her? —Very well, ſaid the moſt paſſionate of lovers, in a tone of perfect indifference.—Very well! retorted the polite Italian, repeating the words with a particular ſhrug—'Faith, my Lord, I am rejoiced it is nothing worſe than very well!

Readers,

Readers, have you never obſerved the roſe which has been opened many a day, and been buffeted by many a ſtorm, how, when its colour falls, when its leaves droop, when we conceive the gentleſt touch would ſcatter them under our feet—how it ſtill preſerves its delicacy in ruins, its ſweetneſs even in decay?—Perhaps, too, if you are very curious enquirers into the arrangements of nature, you might have ſeen blowing on the ſelf-ſame ſtalk, a roſe, in all the pride of lovelineſs, ſeeking, as it were, a ſhelter from the too fervent ſun, or too heavy dews, beneath the drooping foliage of its maternal companion. Nature only can preſent you with the original of my picture; but you

may find no unjuſt repreſentation of it on Lady Hillford's return to her company, leaning on the arm of Miſs Melmoth!—There are few women either ſo very handſome, or ſo very much the reverſe, but that dreſs may afford them ſome advantage: no adventitious ornaments could augment the native graces of Lady Hillford's figure; yet the extreme haſte by which ſhe endeavoured to remedy the neglect of her late toilet had acted as a coſmetic to her complexion, and added a faint bloom to the languid white of her faded, but ſtill expreſſive countenance.

t was not the duties of the toilet which enlivened the cheeks and illumined the eyes of Miſs Melmoth. It was

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the image of Fitzhenry which had attended her thither, which had preſided in all her ideas, communicated animation to proportion, ſpirit to modeſty, and ſoul to beauty.—What divinity! cried the Count:—Fitzhenry was ſtruck dumb;--he had as many ſenſes as any other man; but they were all confounded in one—he could only gaze and adore. She was ſoon obſcured from his eager ſight by the multitude of unembarraſſed votaries, who flocked about her, to offer, at the ſhrine of perfect lovelineſs, their unmeaning homage; all but Mr. Courtenay, who could not preſume to approach the being which, even to him, appeared ſome-

thing more than mortal, becauſe he had not yet paſſed through the forms of preſentation.—What a lovely creature! ſaid he ſoftly to his friend: will not you or Lady Hillford have the goodneſs to name me to her? or am I for ever to be kept at this torturing diſtance?—Fitzhenry immediately preſented him.—At the name of Melmoth, which was the firſt time Courtenay had ever heard it mentioned but in the way of confidence, his amazement was ſo great, that he ſtarted, coloured, heſitated, and was ſo totally confounded, as to pay his compliments with much leſs grace than he was accuſtomed to offer them. Perhaps, had not Fitzhenry known

known that his inclinations were engaged another way, from theſe appearances he might have ſet him down as a rival, in which light he already conſidered the Count de Ferranda, and was almoſt diſpoſed to do the ſame by every other man who but looked towards her.

Lord Hillford joined them at table: he paid the moſt flattering attention to Fitzhenry, was particularly gracious to Mr. Courtenay, and with an art peculiar to himſelf, gained upon the eſteem of thoſe who knew, from ſad experience, how impoſſible it was that he ſhould ever deſerve their good opinion. Lady Hill-

ford's invariable rule, ſince her marriage, was to produce only ſmiles and good humour before the friends of her huſband, concealing her tears, her bitter retroſpections, with caution ſo entirely guarded as prevented the keen eye of penetration from diſcovering that her ingenuous boſom harboured ſuch gloomy gueſts; they were never ſuffered to appear, ſhe only made them the companions of her pillow or her cloſet.—On this day they ſeemed to have taken their flight altogether, on the reunion to one part of her family, a happineſs ſhe conſidered as beyond her hopes. What an event!—to find the ſon of that brother whom ſhe had never ceaſed to adore, ſo noble, ſo generous,

ſo

ſo handſome, ſo amiable; above all, ſo ſteadily the lover of Miſs Melmoth:—how flattering!—it hurried back to her heart a ſort of ſentiment, the return of which was rendered more welcome by its long eſtrangement; it was a ſentiment of felicity, attended by all its pleaſant *ſatellites*, contentment, eaſe, vivacity, hope, joy, and good humour. She had never, ſince ſhe gave her hand to Lord Hilliford, exhibited ſuch variable and fine talents, as on this day; he ſeemed to think ſo himſelf; he was not the laſt to ſignify his admiration. His attentions to her were ſo ſtrongly marked with reſpect and affection, that Fitzhenry, ſufficiently elated by the ſituation he had gained

next to Miſs Melmoth at table, was willing to make every ſort of allowance for his Lordſhip's former conduct, and to eſtabliſh him hereafter in the claſs of thoſe friends whoſe favourable opinion he wiſhed to ſecure.

After dinner, the Princeſs Maritinda propoſed, that the whole party ſhould go to the opera, ſup with her, and the next morning make an excurſion to her country ſeat, twelve miles from Naples, where ſhe would confine them, at leaſt a fortnight, ſhe ſaid, to do penance for thoſe little amiable errors which did not come under the cognizance of the church.—It was a charming propoſal,

ſal, made by a charming perſon, and adopted in all its branches; the opera, the ſupper, and the excurſion ſucceeded to each other. The retirement of this Princeſs might have been called the palace of delights, where every ſort of innocent pleaſure reigned in its turn, and held captive the laughing hours which were running too faſt for their purſuit. The villa *converſaziones* were not diſgraced by frivolity, or its amuſements rendered dangerous by magnificent levity; the former had its foundation in rationality, the latter in ſimplicity: their ſubjects were improving, their ſports rural, and the happy gueſts univerſally charmed with each other.

What golden opportunities were here laid in the way of Fitzhenry, and with what avidity did he ſeize on them all!—he was ſucceſsful in his application to his aunt for her intereſt with Miſs Melmoth; it was at the command of Lady Hillford, and in her preſence, that ſhe received with a noble frankneſs the offer of a heart which came ſo reſpectably recommended to her acceptance: nor was Lady Hillford the only confidant of his happineſs—Lord Hillford had alſo found the way to his confidence; and without explaining the ſhare his aunt had taken to promote his felicity, he pretty well explained to him every other part of his ſituation. He acted in this particular very contrary

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to the counſel of his friend Courtenay; but there was no withſtanding the inſinuating devices of his Lordſhip, who, whilſt he profeſſed himſelf entirely on the ſide of Fitzhenry, expreſſed ſome fears on account of Wardour's prior claim, and told him, with many additions, what he had before heard from his aunt, as paſſing between Lady Wardour and himſelf, when ſhe placed Miſs Melmoth under his protection. My dear Fitzhenry, he added, notwithſtanding I am a Catholic, nay biaſſed to my opinions, and Miſs Melmoth of the ſame faith with myſelf, yet I have ſo great a friendſhip for your father, with ſuch perfect affection for his ſon, that I promiſe to become your

advocate with Lady Wardour, and through her medium to move Mrs. Melmoth in your favour, on the conſideration only that you, in return for my good offices, engage to let me conduct you through the whole of this difficult buſineſs—Yes, my dear boy, there are many difficulties which you do not foreſee, but which muſt be removed; depend on my aſſiſtance in helping you to ſurmount them: but will you fulfil the conditions I offer?—Will you be governed by me, when to ſpeak, and when to be ſilent?—Will you do nothing without firſt conſulting me? I am aſſuming the rights of a father, but I am going to give you a ſingu-

lar proof that I deſerve your confidence.

Fitzhenry ſatisfied all his demands —his temper was too ardent to reſt a moment in ſuſpence when he could arrive at certainty by any poſſible means ſhort of diſhonour. Lord Hillford embraced him, and purſued the converſation.

Your very ſhort acquaintance, ſaid he, with the late Lord Wardour muſt have given you an imperfect view, at the beſt, into his real character; he was certainly a good man, but the predominant features of his mind were nevertheleſs ambition and avarice.

avarice.—Governed by theſe foibles, can you conceive, Fitzhenry, he would have encouraged a union for his ſon, which came unattended by either of theſe flattering recommendations? No—in my conference with Lady Wardour, I was better informed of the true value of that jewel ſhe entruſted to my keeping; and as it ſeems her affections are favourable to you, though intended for another, I would rather betray the ſecret repoſed with me, than that you ſhould be mutually diſappointed.——Know then, the little obſcure portionleſs Miſs Melmoth, however beautiful, however eſtimable, would have found no protector in the father of your rival; he would not have ſecluded her from

from the admiration of all mankind, to force his ſon on her acceptance, on the ſcore of her beauty or good qualities: on the contrary, he would have diſinherited his heir, had he preſumed to beſtow himſelf on a pretty low-born beggar.

Fitzhenry looked aghaſt, and deſired his Lordſhip would haſten to unfold the myſtery:—Yes, ſaid Lord Hillford, I am ready to explain it, if on this ſpot you make an irrevocable oath never to betray the ſecret to my wife, or to the perſon whom you call Miſs Melmoth. Fitzhenry ſwore, and Lord Hillford proceeded—Now liſten to me without interruption, and ſhare the information which I received

received from Lady Wardour—Heaven forgive me if I am guilty of a breach of truſt; it is for your ſake I forfeit my honour, to your keeping I confide its future ſecurity. To the name of Melmoth, continued his Lordſhip after a pauſe, the lady in queſtion, I underſtand, has no right, whatever the claims of her attendant, or her aunt as ſhe is called, may be to it. Lady Wardour's intelligence did not extend to that particular, or indeed to the real name of the perſon ſuppoſed to be her niece; ſhe only thought it neceſſary to inform me that her lovely ward was the daughter of a Britiſh peer, who, having determined on her intermarrying in their family, and being eccentric in his

his humour, had ſent the child to be brought up under their eye, with the ridiculous determination of never acknowledging her for the heireſs of his immenſe riches, until ſhe had eſpouſed the young man with whom ſhe was educated, and by whoſe parents ſhe had been foſtered.

Fitzhenry forgot his order of ſilence, and exclaimed—Heavens! what a diſcovery is this, and how indeed will it increaſe my difficulties!—I am loſt, infallibly loſt, without your Lordſhip's aſſiſtance!—Tell me the name of this unnatural father, my dear Lord, that I may throw myſelf at his feet, and ſwear in his preſence, never, never to reſign his angel daughter!

ter!—nor Wardour, nor any man exiſting ſhall tear her from the heart of Fitzhenry!

Lord Hillford ſmiled at his impetuoſity, and calmly replied, You tax my friendſhip, young man, beyond its abilities: the name of her father at preſent reſts with Lady Wardour, and Lady Wardour muſt never know that I have diſcloſed any part of the curious hiſtory with which ſhe intruſted me; be you therefore ſilent, and leave your intereſt in my hands. When Lady Wardour has given up the name of Lady Olivia's father to my importunities, do you imagine it ſhall be concealed from you? or have you

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no better faith in my profeſſions, than to ſuppoſe I ſhall not myſelf become your advocate with him?

Penetrated with gratitude, the too ſanguine Fitzhenry bent his knee, and renewed his former aſſurances of the ſtricteſt obedience to all his commands. Lord Hillford ſeemed affected by his tranſports, and bluſhed as he raiſed him from the ground. I have told you, ſaid he, her Chriſtian name, and the title to which it is annexed: but recollect that, on the forfeiture of my friendſhip, you are to forget there is ſuch a woman in the world as Lady Olivia; for until I am able to inform you of her other pretenſions

tenſions to name and rank, you muſt think only of Miſs Melmoth. Before Fitzhenry could finiſh his reply to this laſt injunction, Mr. Courtenay entered the apartment; he held a packet of letters in his hand—theſe are for you, my Lord, preſenting them to his friend—open them, I beſeech you, that I may have the ſatisfaction of knowing the accounts you get from your family are not quite ſo gloomy as what I have received from my own. Lord Hillford had taken himſelf out of the room by another door, whilſt Fitzhenry remained buried in thought; but hearing Courtenay urge his intreaties in accents of ſadneſs, he ſtarted, looked

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at him, ſaw his face overſpread with dejection, and eagerly demanded the cauſe from whence it ſprung.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.